Rugby Union International: England 26 New Zealand 26

Rampant England break the mould

Robert Armstrong at Twickenham

ENGLAND can look forward to the Five Nations Championship and next year's tour to New Zealand with confidence after stunning the All Blacks and quite possibly themselves in a performance of panache and intensity last weekend.

Though they dissipated a 23-9 half-time lead, and with it the prospect of a momentous victory, they did enough in this cliff-hanging contest to suggest it may be a watershed in the cultural revolution of their coach Clive Woodward.

The learning curve of newcomers such as Matt Perry, Darren Garforth and David Rees steepened sharply under the leadership of Lawrence Dallaglio, who had probably his finest game for his country.

Little wonder that Woodward, whose ball-in-hand strategy was gloriously vindicated, insisted that the relevant match statistic was the 3-2 try count in England's favour, something that seemed an impossible dream before the kick-off.

"After playing the All Blacks to a standstill, Christmas will feel good," he said. "However, we have to go through all this again next summer when we play Australia, South Africa and New Zealand twice. We are capable of massive performances like this but we are still a long way off matching the All Blacks or Springboks over a series of Tests."

Woodward especially hailed his captain and the emergency stand-off Paul Grayson. "Lawrence had an outstanding game and is a fantastic leader. Grayson was outstanding. He organised the game well and stood 'in the hole', enabling the back row to play."


On the charge . . . Dallaglio, centre, hacks through for England's third try PHOTO: ADAM BUTLER

Never before has Twickenham given vent to such euphoria over a drawn Test, coming as it did after five matches without an England win. The conservative mould of English rugby was broken in many ways: players kept the ball on the move instead of kicking penalties, the fly-half Grayson stood right up in the faces of the All Blacks. At half-time the six replacements operated as unofficial cheerleaders on a trot around the perimeter.

Woodward, who looked more like an enthusiastic anorak than a national coach as he celebrated each try, revealed that the players had been set a target of 35 points to defeat the All Blacks.

Had the tourists taken a couple of first-half chances, England would surely have been in trouble after the interval; in the event their 20 points in the opening 19 minutes proved just enough to stave off defeat.

However, the result of this unrelenting clash was less significant than the adventurous manner of its achievement. Three tries in a mind-boggling 11 minutes by David Rees, Richard Hill and Dallaglio exposed uncharacteristic hesitancy in the All Blacks defence which was brought under control only after they had fallen behind 20-3. Later, when the tourists were winning ruck after ruck with clinical efficiency, England managed to keep the expected torrent of New Zealand points down to a trickle, notably in the final half-hour. "We played so fast that there were plenty of shattered bodies by half-time," said Woodward.

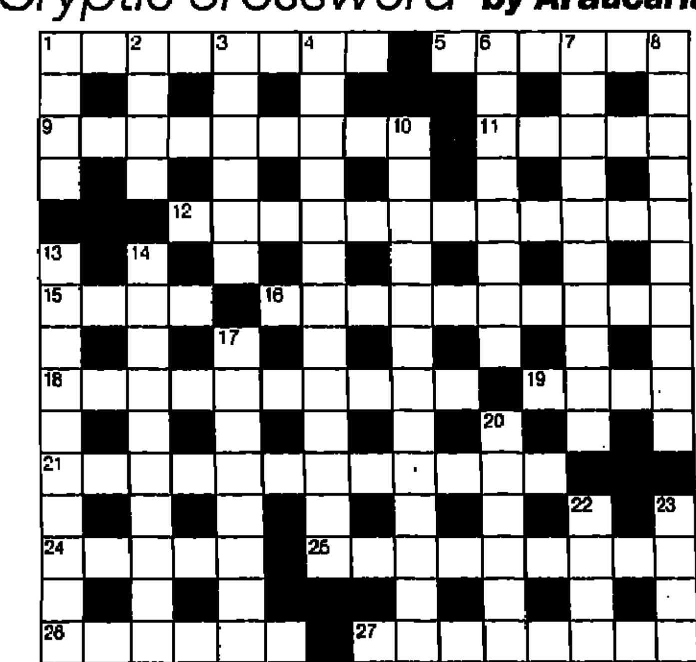
The All Blacks seemed unsure whether to be disappointed by their failure to win the second Test or relieved at clawing back a 17-point deficit. At the start of the second half, with the emotional swell of Elgar ringing in their ears, John Hart's badly rattled side seemed to have a mountain to climb, yet shrewdly-worked tries by Andrew Mehrtens — he also kicked 16 points — and Walter Little put the tourists within sight of what would have been another victory in a year in which they have been unbeaten.

"I have to applaud the way England played," said the New Zealand captain Justin Marshall. "It was a good, tough, free-flowing match. Our ball retention was shocking but we knew things would pick up provided we stuck with the ball. We made four or five scoring chances."

Though it was easy to sympathise with Dallaglio's claim that England "definitely should have won", analysis of the crucial phases indicates the opposite: the All Blacks crossed the gain line 42 times to England's 19; won the ball in open play 71 times to England's 46; won 17 line-outs to England's five; and spent nearly 50 of the 82 minutes played in England's half.

Anyone doubting that New Zealand still top the pecking order should be reminded that South Africa (twice), Australia (twice) and England (at Old Trafford) have all been well beaten by Hart's team in the past six months. Possibly most disappointing from England's point of view was their meagre return of two penalty goals in the final hour when their fitness was shown to be short of the intensive pace at which they wished to play.

Cryptic crossword by Araucaria



Across

1 Cry of pain in uncovered carriage (8)
5 Where tea (say) is sweet? (6)
9 Molecular number following night-flier in Finnish (9)
11 Result rather reveals extreme (5)
12 Doctor, giving a pig a chance to fly, died: back to it, then? (7-5)
15 A drink to Lily (4)
16 Black hair is right to break impasses (10)
18 A smashing place for recycling (6,4)
19 Feedback from Arthurian maid (4)
21 Back on the field there may be mercy (5-7)
24 Smoke from motor, about one gramme (5)
25 Perform at Mach 2, possibly — the end is in sight (9)
26 Carrier for children? Rubbish! (6)
27 Street mentioned by elegist, finally barbed (5-3)

Down

1 Transport supremo to perform on the street (4)
2 Take a point of dress (4)
3 Improvement to appear inverted (6)
4 Cry of cat, bad or otherwise, eaten by dog on the way back (8,5)
6 Loaf with Blur, vaguely, at golf match (4-4)
7 Getting entry into spelling? (10)
8 Give way and have a way with a team (5,5)
10 Trento on Capri? It could be Felixstowe (9,4)
13 Time off for graduates going up on a Baltic cruise (10)
14 Leave the funny round sails OK? (5,5)
17 The black, not the quick thorn! (4-4)
20 Pole newly off to college (6)
22 I don't believe in the resurrection of this body (4)
23 The other side of the yard (4)

Last week's solution

A T G H A A P
ASFITASA FIDDLE
S M B R T M E
FACE BUDGERIGAR
S L N R R S
ESCAPE UNAWARES
I L T L T
UNHAPPY ELLIPSE
R I T O W
FLAMINGO BANTAM
O I D C E N
DAWNPATROL MASK
T G R A O E O
CHILLI CONCARNE
E Y C K G L G

Scotland 10 South Africa 68

Scotland slide to new low

Robert Kitson at Murrayfield

SHORT of burning effigies of the coach Richie Dixon on the pavements of Princes Street, it is hard to see where Scotland go from here. As they stumble from one mauling to the next, precious few excuses remain on the shelves this Christmas.

The lower-fibre diet of Five Nations rugby is unlikely to ease the hollow feeling in the pit of Caledonian stomachs. The realists know that record defeats in each of their last three outings, by an aggregate margin of 152-38, have swept aside the last of the sandbags protecting the shallow pool of Scottish playing talent. It is scant consolation that the humiliation here proved, in many ways, easier to digest than the Wallaby débâcle three weeks ago; when you are numb already, pain is a relative concept.

Scotland have leaked more than 60 points before at Test level, losing 62-31 to New Zealand in Dunedin 17 months ago, but conceding 10 tries on their own doorstep is less easy to explain away. The hawks in the ongoing clubs-versus-districts argument now have more than enough ammunition to fire at their critics.

There is already knee-jerk talk of employing a coach from overseas, which shows how quickly the tide has turned since the Lions tour. If Ian McGeechan and Jim Telfer, those tried and trusted alchemists, cannot staunch the bleeding, which expensive wizards do the Scots intend turning to?

The result from Twickenham and the swaths of empty seats merely compounded the Scottish Rugby Union's misery. One cannot fool even the regulars for long, and official estimates of a 50,000 attendance, like the final margin, looked horribly inflated.

Against Australia the Scots let in 29 points in the second half and thought the sky had fallen in; against the Springboks it was 54. South Africa ruthlessly exploited the increasing gaps just as they had against France.

Their back three of Percy Montgomery, James Small and Pieter Rossouw shared five tries and must now be ranked alongside Cullen, Wilson and Lomu. Montgomery's 26-point haul, including two glittering tries and eight conversions, prompted a battered Rob Wainwright to hail the Western Province flier's performance as the best he had seen by a full-back.

The Springboks, in the words of their coach Nick Mallett, "exceeded all our expectations" on their tour of Europe. They amassed an extraordinary 38 tries in five Tests.

The Guardian Weekly

Vol 157, No 25
Week ending December 21, 1997

The Washington Post. Le Monde


A fan of South Korean presidential candidate Lee Hoi-chang signals his support at a ruling party rally in the run-up to this week's election. Mr Lee is running neck-and-neck with Kim Dae-jung, the first opposition leader in with a chance to win PHOTO: KIM JAE-HWAN

A $400 bn gamble with world's food

John Vidal and Mark Milner

SIX giant agrochemical corporations are poised to dominate world food production with genetically engineered food. The result could be millions of farmers unemployed, poor countries losing whole export markets, a consumer revolt in Europe, and concentration of farming in fewer hands.

The scale and speed of the food revolution gathering pace in the United States is surprising governments, industry and analysts. The companies claim that more than 30 million acres of genetically engineered crops have been planted this year, more than three times as many as in 1996 and 10 times the acreage of 1995. "The market is expected to double again next year," said a spokesman for Monsanto, the chemical and biotechnology firm.

In Britain, trial crops have been grown for several years and the first commercial releases of genetically engineered seeds are expected to be approved by the European Union early next year.

The $8 billion investment led by US-based Monsanto, with international conglomerates Novartis, Agro-Evo, Dupont, Zeneca and Dow behind it, raises questions of corporate influence on governments. The drive to push genetic engineering has involved heavy lobbying of trade organisations, regulatory bodies, lawmakers, the media and consumers.

The companies claim that the new technologies are environmentally friendly and will lead to health benefits, an end to world hunger, and reduced use of pesticides.

"There's no crop or person that cannot benefit. There's a tide of history turning. You can look back, or ask how you're going to feed the world," Monsanto said.

However, international consumer groups advise caution and say that scientific, ethical and social concerns are being swept aside. "Scientists and industry are making decisions on behalf of consumers with minimal public debate," said Julie Shepherd of the Consumers Association.

"This will add to hunger," said Professor Vandana Shiva, director of the Science and Technology research institute in Delhi. "Millions of small farmers without access to the technologies or to global markets will be unable to compete."

In an analysis of the changes taking place in the global food industry, the Guardian has found:

- A revolving door between the US government and the biotech industry;
- Heavy lobbying to rewrite world food safety standards in favour of biotechnology;
- New laws protecting the US food industry from criticism;
- Unexpected environmental problems;
- Legal contracts locking farmers into corporate control of production;
- Attempts by the world's leading PR firms to massage debate in favour of genetic engineering;
- The use of world organisations to challenge governments opposing genetically modified crops;
- Consumers being given no effective choice of foods;
- Fears that the economies of developing countries will be adversely affected.

The revolution is based on simple gene manipulation that modifies seeds to resist herbicides patented by the same companies. In a few years it is expected to move into hitherto unimaginable foods.

Behind the vision of more productive crops needing fewer pesticides, a fierce battle is being fought over food production. The prize for the US-dominated industry is a $400 billion-a-year global market.

"Their combined power to dominate world markets is awesome," a UN economist said. "The train has already left the station. It is practically unstoppable now."

Biotechnology will enable the US to dominate markets further and will stimulate its economy. The UN's International Labour Organisation predicts that the food revolution will be established globally within 10 years, with enormous consequences. Agriculture represents 65 per cent of the global economy.

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation expects great social and economic changes. "It is not possible to hope that there will be job creation with the new technologies," a spokesman said. "It will fundamentally affect farming everywhere and play a large part in the future of the poorest."

The McKinsey Business Quarterly report says: "The world is about to witness a revolution. The science is now in the hands of large, well-funded, agricultural, chemical and pharmaceutical giants which are poised to move from a handful of products on the market today to a full menu in five years' time. Biotechnology is revolutionising the food chain."

This week senior players in the British food industry expressed new concerns for genetically modified foods. A spokesman for the Consumers Association said: "It is assumed that new foods are adequately controlled. But legislation in this area has come late and is inadequate to address all consumer concerns."

There are only two products on British supermarket shelves obviously produced by genetic modification — tomato puree sold by Safeway and Sainsbury's, and Co-op vegetarian cheese. Both are suitably labelled. The Consumers Association says a wide range of foods, including soya products, contains genetically modified ingredients, but these are unidentifiable because of mixing.

Resistance to genetically modified foods is growing in Europe and the developing countries, uniting consumer and environment groups. Trial crops are being sabotaged.

The Food Revolution

'Their combined power to dominate world markets is awesome. The train has already left the station. It is practically unstoppable now'
— UN economist

Monsanto's harvest, page 19

Asia crisis hits West's economies

Alex Brummer

THE crisis in Asia's financial markets will lead to a sharp downturn in growth among Western economies next year, according to an authoritative forecast issued this week.

As a result of the turbulence, output in Japan will drop 2 per cent this year and next, while growth among all the larger industrial countries, including Britain, will be 1 per cent below previous forecasts in 1998.

The gloomy predictions are contained in the respected world economic outlook forecast from the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. It suggests that the impact of the events in the Pacific will be far more severe than has generally been recognised.

Western finance ministers have been seeking to play down the impact of the Asian crisis, fearing loss of confidence in Western stock markets and the global economy. But the OECD points out that unless prompt and adequate measures are taken in the Pacific, the crisis could create "serious economic difficulties".

The OECD's forecast comes at a critical time. Despite a record $57 billion International Monetary Fund rescue package for South Korea, Southeast Asian leaders this week demanded more help from Europe, the United States and Japan in an attempt to stem the tide of turbulence.

The only brighter note amid the recent gloom was provided by South Korea, where financial markets rose sharply on Monday as fears eased that the controversial IMF bail-out may not be enough to pull the country back from debt default.

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF80	Netherlands	G 5
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 450	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,500	Switzerland	SF 3.80

Playing Russian roulette with the planet's future

I AM quite prepared to accept that the United States, with its huge, well-developed consumer market and vast appetite for products, is a major force driving the world economy ever onwards towards greater growth and economic prosperity (December 7). It is also a sad fact that other industrial countries, especially in Europe and Japan, have exploited this situation the most, extracting much more benefit than poorer countries still struggling to develop.

However, I cannot accept that this is good for our world, or that the US is providing an essential service that we should all be grateful for. If a man is holding a gun to your head, it is little consolation that you sold him the bullets.

We all have to accept, in the developed and developing world, that it is the modern global economic system, with its obsessive drive towards consumer-led economic growth, that is destroying the planet. We are all pointing a gun, of our own creation, at the planet. And with every addition to the vast detritus of pollution that fills our environment, we take another step closer to the moment when we pull the trigger.

It would be nice to think that consumer power, especially US consumer power, could force the world economy on to a less destructive course, but we all know that consumer demand is determined more by the marketing departments of big manufacturers than by high moral or ideological principles. It is of course the same big manufacturers that set President Clinton's agenda at the Kyoto conference.
W S Williams,
Kofu, Yamanashi, Japan

GOVERNMENTS and dinosaur corporations, especially in the United States, have become the doom-mongers by claiming the response to climate change inevitably spells disaster for the rich economies.

In fact, very substantial greenhouse gas reductions are possible at zero cost or with economic gains — mostly through efficient use of energy and transport, combined heat and power, and the best renewables.

Europe should now teach the Americans a lesson by unilaterally adopting a challenging target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meeting it by using the best technologies and enlightened market-based policies.

This will stimulate new efficiencies in European economies that will create jobs, wealth and export markets that are compatible with the eventual stability of the climate — at the expense of US competitiveness. In doing so, Europe will show developing countries that profligacy and waste are barriers, not prerequisites, to development.

Job losses and economic damage will arise only if the early response to climate change is based on wildly expensive and inappropriate technologies such as solar photovoltaics. The promotion of PV by some environmental groups has strengthened the hand of those who claim that responding to climate change is prohibitively expensive for the next 20 to 30 years. Some oil companies have even jumped on the solar bandwagon, at least through their rhetoric, precisely to offer jam tomorrow and oil today.

There is a way out of the greenhouse, but rather than top-down technology diktats, it is market mechanisms such as emissions trading, energy market reform and a shift of taxes from work and investment to pollution that will force the right technologies into the market.
Clive Bates,
London

THE Australian government must take considerable blame for the failure of Kyoto to set worthwhile greenhouse targets.

Australia, a relatively wealthy country, has failed to accept responsibility for reducing its emissions. This is not a win for Australia; it is a loss for our planet.

A coal industry spokesperson stated that any reduction in coal sales to Japan will be compensated for by increased sales to other Asian countries. Another shocking statement came from a land clearer from Queensland, who said that he expected the only thing to stop his work was when he ran out of trees to clear.
Bob Holderness-Roddam,
Austins Ferry, Tasmania, Australia

National service Italian-style

THE opening paragraph of Vera Haller's article (Military service loses appeal in Italy, November 30), implies that young men in Italy contrive to get out of their compulsory military service by masking as conscientious objectors. This gives a completely misleading impression.

While I agree that the 50,000 who applied for conscientious objector status are unlikely all to be pacifists, the majority certainly strongly object to the inanity of 10 months spent twiddling their thumbs in barracks, often at the mercy of low-level teasing or bullying by older recruits or career soldiers. Others perhaps object to the debased behaviour of some recruits when taking part in the UN mission to Somalia.

In a country where unemployment both for qualified and unqualified youngsters is very high and where there is little tradition of voluntary service in the community, surely a national programme which enables young people to get their first taste of a job and/or serving in the community is worth encouraging. Personally, I believe it should be extended to young women, too.
Christine Calvert,
Milan, Italy

Why Australia loves tobacco

STUART MACKENZIE (December 7) should now redirect his attention to the policies of the conservative governments in his own state and country, Victoria and Australia; governments that respectively seek and grant exemptions from the bans on tobacco sponsorship of sport. At least Tony Blair can claim to be protecting a well-established "high-technology" industry.

Australian governments are merely desperate to win and retain events that can be justified only in terms of promotion and tourism. The 1996 Australian Grand Prix in fact attracted only 3,300 international visitors, and this figure probably included teams and media.

What is perhaps worse, the Victorian government fully underwrites the licence fees payable to Bernie Ecclestone and the costs of the event itself. The Victorian government has so far subsidised the event, a vehicle for a full range of tobacco advertising inside and outside the track, to the tune of more than A$75 million ($50 million). To add to the enormity of the affair, the event is actually run in a public park designed for healthy recreation.

The Australian minister for health, Michael Wooldridge, has only recently rejected the recommendation of two reports that all exemptions from the act banning tobacco sponsorship of sporting and cultural events be phased out by 2001. Unfortunately, that decision allowed the British Labour government to point to Australian policy to help justify its capitulation to the Formula One lobby.
David Littlewood,
Albert Park, Victoria, Australia

ACCORDING to Stuart Mackenzie, we know tobacco kills. Do we? If it does, it is in a very different way from the way a bullet or a knife or a fast car kills. I have been smoking for more than 50 years and must have consumed more than 500,000 cigarettes, not to mention a few hundred cigars and pounds of pipe tobacco. So even if we do know that tobacco kills, we equally know that it's not very good at the job.

Tobacco also gives life, as can be testified by millions of smallholder farmers in remote parts of Africa and Asia.

Mr Mackenzie assumes that any other sponsors of sporting events would have less malign effects than the tobacco manufacturers — a highly dubious assumption. If, which is far from proven, sponsorship of sporting events by tobacco companies encourages kids to smoke, perhaps we should support it on the equally unproven assumption that tobacco is an alternative to marijuana and other more harmful substances!
Don Pearson,
Accra, Ghana

Africa rich in human wisdom

WHAT exactly is the troubled heart of Africa (November 23)? Kenya? Well maybe, but the new Congo is closer to the heart geographically, and several regions (I'd vote for southern Sudan) come closer to the heart culturally.

Ah, maybe you mean politics is the troubled heart of Africa. Sure African politics is troubled, as the article vividly demonstrates. But is politics the heart of Africa? Is politics the heart of anywhere?

Africa, as Matthew Engel suggests, is "complicated". Perhaps enigmatic is a better word. Or even recondite, especially for Westerners. And when we don't understand the heart of Africa we assume, like Conrad, that it is darkness — and then we find the political proofs for our assumption.

Politics is not the heart of Africa, and the heart of Africa is not troubled. Africa is a goldmine of human wisdom, family relationships, hospitality, religious belief, music, subtle cultural richness, appreciation and respect for history, and hope. Talk to African people, not just the politicians and journalists. Listen to those people who are not starving, but are hungry. Live with them, not just to help them but to receive some of their richness.
Raymond Downing,
Webuye, Kenya

Briefly

RICHARD HALL writes of Hastings Kamuzu Banda of Malawi (Obituary, December 7) that the last 30 years of his long life have placed him in a line with the likes of Idi Amin, albeit slightly behind.

In one respect, however, Idi Amin still has some way before him from the seclusion of his Jeddah exile to take his seat among the tyrant-gods of Africa: as the latest edition of Chambers Biographical Dictionary tells us, in 1993 "his latest wife bore him his 43rd child".
Helmut Wrost,
Baltmannsweiler, Germany

MARK LAWSON is right to be concerned by the attempt by lawyers to acquire monopoly rights in Diana's face and name (A down-payment on the People's Princess", December 14). The good news is that their attempt will almost certainly fail. For a trade mark to be registered under the Trade Marks Act 1994, it must be capable of distinguishing one trading entity from another. The saturation use of Diana's face and name image have made them in law public property: nobody associates either with a particular manufacturer or distribution channel.
Andrew Clay,
Leeds

TELL me that Adam Easton's article on the death penalty being sought in the Philippines for women who have abortions and the doctors performing them is a poorly timed April Fool's joke (Death penalty sought in abortion cases, December 14). I cannot believe such hypocrisy concerning the sanctity of life can be considered seriously. Since when is two lives for a life a Christian principle?
Peter Vervoorn,
Aldgate, South Australia

WHILE President Robert Mugabe moves to return farmland from whites to Zimbabwean peasants, from whom it was stolen during the European invasion, the Australian prime minister, John Howard, continues to make it increasingly difficult for indigenous Australians to claim back any territory to which they are similarly and legally entitled. Who is right, and why?
John Spencer,
Great Longstone, Derbyshire

YES, I did say that Stanley Kubrick didn't have enough money to make me work with him again — but that's true of any film producer who tries to persuade me to leave troubled but still beautiful Sri Lanka and head back to the Arctic Circle (The wizard of odd, December 7). I would enjoy working with Stanley again — if I was 30 years younger.
Arthur C Clarke,
Colombo, Sri Lanka

The **Guardian Weekly**

December 21, 1997 Vol 157 No 25

Annual subscription rates are £49 United Kingdom; £55 Europe inc. Eire, USA and Canada; £63 Rest of World.
Letters to the Editor and other editorial correspondence to: The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ.
Fax: 44-171-242-0985 (UK: 0171-242 0985)
e-mail: weekly@guardian.co.uk

Kyoto deal 'leaves US free to pollute'

John Vidal

IT WAS the longest night of the most acrimonious session of the most frenetic set of negotiations in which 160 governments have ever engaged.

In the end, exhausted and with no one claiming outright victory, they emerged last week with an agreement that may cut global greenhouse gas emissions by an average 5.2 per cent within 15 years.

But even as the 10,000 officials, industry lobbyists and eco-activists prepared to emit huge masses of carbon dioxide flying home from Kyoto, United States Congress members representing coal, oil and steel interests were preparing to scupper the treaty by voting it out when it goes before them for legal ratification next year. And the US vice-president, Al Gore, said the Clinton administration would not even send the treaty to the Senate unless Third World countries agreed to its terms.

European analysts claimed that the US, the world's largest polluter by far, would need to make no reduction at all because of clauses that allowed emission-trading with other countries.

The compromise requires the European Union to reduce its greenhouse emissions by an average of 8 per cent below 1990 levels, the US by 7 per cent, and Japan by 6 per cent. There are similar targets for 21 other industrialised countries, which must be met between 2008 and 2012, with further cuts to follow.

In all, 38 countries will cut emissions below 1990 levels. Developing countries, the Russian Federation and Ukraine are not obliged to change their energy policies. The EU's average will let less-developed countries such as Greece and Portugal reduce their emissions by less.

Speaking at the end of the conference, Britain's deputy prime minister, John Prescott, who with the British environment minister, Michael Meacher, was acknowledged to have been largely responsible for saving the talks from breakdown, said: "This historic deal will help curb the problems of climate change. It commits developed countries to make legally binding cuts in their emissions. It is good news for the environment and good news for international diplomacy."

As President Clinton, the Japanese prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, and other world leaders hailed the agreement, the EU commissioner, Ritt Bjerregaard, remained sceptical: "We would have liked the parties to be more ambitious. But with the pressure from senators, the car manufacturers, the oil companies and others, I think it was very surprising and encouraging that the Americans came up with a figure of 7 per cent."

The US failed to achieve several of its aims, including making developing countries agree to targets and timetables. But European analysts said Washington had technically won a business-as-usual deal and could avoid making any cuts at all.

The agreement is known to include the possibility of complex trading of pollution rights between certain countries.

Russia and Ukraine have seen their emissions drop with the collapse of heavy industry since the fall of communism. Rich countries will be able to buy their unused portion to set against their own emissions.

"It looks like the US will be able to sidestep their agreement, pay Moscow and claim the cuts as their own," a spokesman for the Royal Institute for International Affairs in London said.

Greenpeace said: "The agreement will not protect the world from dangerous change on its own, but it is a turning point. It has merely delayed the inevitable move away from coal and oil, but at a very high price."

Details of how the agreement, which comes into force when 60 countries have ratified it, will be policed have been left to a further meeting, expected to be held in Argentina next year.

Le Monde, page 13
Washington Post, page 15



Nearly 15,000 Bangladesh veterans of the war against Pakistan in 1971, in which 3 million died, gather in Dhaka ahead of independence day celebrations this week PHOTO. RAFIQUR RAHMAN

West gets tough in Bosnia

Ian Traynor in Königswinter

THE international official charged with rebuilding democracy in Bosnia, Carlos Westendorp, last week said he would sack the key Bosnian Serb nationalist leader, Momcilo Krajisnik, unless he helped to form a multi-ethnic governmental apparatus.

Armed with sweeping new powers given to him by a two-day 50-country conference on Bosnia, which ended last week in the German town of Königswinter on the Rhine, Mr Westendorp said he would aim to impose agreements on the squabbling parties to the five-year conflict. He claimed the "turning point" had been reached in Bosnia.

The year ahead, climaxing in a pan-Bosnian general election at the end of 1998, will decide whether the war-ravaged country will settle for a multi-ethnic democratic future or slide back into chaos, war and partition, Mr Westendorp said.

Mr Krajisnik is the Serb representative on the three-man Bosnian presidency and a hardline nationalist who is a key aide of Radovan Karadzic. He joined all the other Serb delegates in walking out of last week's conference in protest at the international community's insistence on raising the incendiary issue of Kosovo — the south Serbian region where the ethnic Albanian majority lives in a Serbian police state.

In the past year Mr Krajisnik, bent on consolidating an ethnic partitioning of Bosnia, has sought to wreck efforts both to establish multi-ethnic governmental bodies and to return refugees to their homes. Mr Westendorp said he would order the sacking of Mr Krajisnik if he continued his blocking tactics.

The conference decided on a carrot-and-stick approach, rewarding co-operation with the peace effort and sanctioning intransigence. It set several deadlines, most of them for later this month, for agreement by the Bosnian Serb, Muslim and Croat parties on a number of issues.

ETA kills to avenge jailed leaders

Adela Gooch in Madrid

THE Basque separatist group ETA has carried out its threat to kill a politician from Spain's governing conservative People's party (PP) in retaliation for a Madrid court's decision to jail leaders of its political wing.

José Luis Caso, aged 64, represented the PP on the council in Renteria, a small town near the French border where separatist feeling is strong. A masked gunman burst into a bar on Thursday last week and shot him in the head before escaping in a getaway car.

Caso had refused police protection, despite being singled out by ETA as a target. He is the third PP councillor to be killed in Basque Country since the current government took office in May 1996. In July Caso received a letter warning him that he would be next. The threat was made soon after the shooting of a Basque PP councillor caused mass protests throughout the country.

The prime minister, José Maria Aznar, who has adopted a tough stance on ETA, warned that he would not change his policy. "If this is an attempt to make the government alter course then it is a deliberately mistaken one," he said at an European Union summit in Luxembourg.

Mr Aznar has been accused of taking a short-sighted approach to the Basque problem, one which is unlikely to create a climate where talks might be possible. He says negotiations are impossible until ETA unconditionally lays down its arms. He argues that the previous Socialist government's attempts to open a dialogue through veteran ETA leaders exiled in Latin America came to nothing, while a younger, ever more radical leadership strengthened its hold on the group in Spain.

The Madrid court's decision earlier this month to convict and jail the entire 23-strong leadership of Herri Batasuna (HB), ETA's political wing, for collaborating with terrorists is the most controversial result so far of the government's stance.

It was the first time the judiciary had recognised a direct link between ETA and its political allies. The ruling was welcomed by the mainstream parties. But it alienated moderate Basque nationalists, including the Basque Nationalist party, the largest in the region, which normally supports Mr Aznar's minority government in parliament.

The shooting has served to heal that rift, which threatened to undermine an all-party anti-terrorism pact in place for the past decade. Emergency sessions involving non-violent political forces were held in Basque Country and Madrid. The shooting also put ETA sympathisers on the defensive.

Nevertheless, the onus is on Mr Aznar to find a way forward in Basque Country, especially now that the British government is making progress in Northern Ireland.

ETA has been showing some signs of flexibility. It has offered to drop its campaign against the dispersal of ETA prisoners to jails around Spain, which has been cited as justification for several attacks. The government responded by announcing that it would adopt "a more active penal policy" and offering to transfer 15 jailed ETA members closer to home.

Although Caso's death brings the number of victims this year to 13, up from five last year, the death toll is still below the annual average of 22 since ETA began its campaign of violence 29 years ago.

Interior ministry officials say the organisation is militarily on the defensive. It has 50 to 60 trained commandos, backed up by a network of perhaps 500 people. Close co-operation between French and Spanish police has hit the group hard, making France no longer a safe haven for ETA leaders — several have been arrested there this year.

The main problem faced by Mr Aznar is that HB has always been subservient to ETA, and there is no sign that ETA is willing to give up violence.

But moderate Basques, including some nationalists, see a glimmer of hope in the decision to jail HB's leaders. They argue that HB will have to choose a new council, which might establish a new identity for the party distinct from ETA.

The Week

WASHINGTON reacted with caution after Iran's president, Mohammed Khatami, made a surprise proposal for a "thoughtful dialogue" with the country it once regularly dubbed the Great Satan.
Washington Post, page 15

SOUTH Africa's president, Nelson Mandela, confirmed that the ruling African National Congress was looking for a merger with the rival Inkatha Freedom party. Meanwhile a judge found that the killing of eight Inkatha demonstrators outside the ANC headquarters in 1994 amounted to at least attempted murder, but that there was insufficient evidence to warrant criminal prosecution.

NORTH and South Korea, China and the United States said they had "successfully inaugurated" talks aimed at achieving peace on the peninsula 44 years after the Korean war.

MORE than 270 Tutsi refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo were killed in an attack on a camp in northwest Rwanda. Survivors of the massacre said Hutu rebels came at night and started slaying their victims.

A TAJIK airliner with 86 people on board crashed in the United Arab Emirates, near Sharjah airport. An official said a male flight attendant was the only survivor.

HONG KONG closed its biggest chicken market for three days to sterilise it against the new strain of influenza, known as "bird flu", which has caused panic.

FRENCH police, working with an anti-paedophilia unit, carried out a countrywide raid to round up 40 people suspected of procuring child pornography photographs for distribution on the Internet.

THE little-known town of Akmola in northern Kazakhstan was officially inaugurated as the former Soviet republic's new capital after President Nursultan Nazarbayev moved there from the old capital, Almaty.

Yeltsin illness brings chill to Kremlin

James Meek in Moscow

THE machine was rolling again. Dark figures scurried across the snow-swept expanse of Red Square towards the gate beneath the clocktower, mobile phone aerials sprouting from beneath their fur hats. Russia's commercial media were once more on the Kremlin briefing trail.

Leading the sparring with Boris Yeltsin's super-smooth sultan of spin, the press spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky, was Alexei Venediktov, chief commentator of the Echo Moskvy radio station.

For those outside the Kremlin press pack, the impact of Mr Yeltsin's latest illness on the truce between the Kremlin and parliament is a crushing reminder of the fragility of Russia's democratic institutions six years after the collapse of totalitarianism.

Last week the Kremlin denied a report that Mr Yeltsin was suffering from renewed heart trouble rather than the acute viral infection described by aides as the reason for his withdrawal from public life for at least 10 days. Television pictures were released showing a pale Mr Yeltsin walking slowly but purposefully as he met his chief of staff, Valentin Yumashev, at a sanatorium in Barvikha, outside Moscow.

Until news of the president's hospitalisation leaked out earlier in the week the political élite was enjoying an eerie atmosphere of co-operation. A financial crisis had been narrowly avoided. A few friendly gestures from Mr Yeltsin and a token shake-out of opposition hate figures had persuaded parliament to begin passing the budget. Moscow insiders had become so blasé about the president's recovery from heart surgery that the most likely successor to Mr Yeltsin seemed to be Mr Yeltsin himself.

The touchstone of the new mood was to be an unprecedented round-table gathering at which the president, the government and leaders of the main parties in parliament — including the communist Gennady Zyuganov and the ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky — would try to resolve an issue that has divided the country for centuries and led to civil war and famine: who should be allowed to own Russia's land? Then the president caught a cold, and all plans and forecasts changed.

The round table is postponed indefinitely. The communist-nationalist opposition must now consider whether to take advantage of Mr Yeltsin's illness to renew their attack on the government's economic reform programme.

Meanwhile the race to succeed Mr Yeltsin is on again — and it has never looked more wide open.

Even if the president, aged 66, recovers quickly, doubts about his ability to run for a third term in 2000 — already a constitutionally doubtful move — will persist. The prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, has re-emerged as a serious candidate. A stodgy, unimaginative figure, famously inarticulate in public because the impossibility of swearing deprives him of his usual eloquence, he represents a bridge between radical economic liberals and the moderate communist-nationalists.

The liberals' champion, the young, pro-Western deputy prime minister, Boris Nemtsov, is still seen as Mr Yeltsin's chosen heir. But he has lost his shine with the public through over-exposure and association with the hated privatisation guru, Anatoly Chubais.

The electorate is disenchanted with the sluggish communist Mr Zyuganov, and the antics of the nationalist Mr Zhirinovsky, leaving the huge patriot-conservative vote to Moscow's *dirigiste* mayor, Yuri Luzhkov, and the former paratroop general, Alexander Lebed.

Although Messrs Chubais, Chernomyrdin and Nemtsov still enjoy extensive access to Mr Yeltsin, he has built an inner family circle around himself to ward off attempts to undermine his power. It centres on his daughter, Tatyana Dyachenko, and his close friend, Mr Yumashev.

Patriots for Russia, page 18

UN-Iraq talks fail to break deadlock

Julian Borger

A FRESH Iraqi crisis loomed this week after the Baghdad government told the United Nations weapons inspectors that they would never be allowed to enter presidential palaces in their search for Saddam Hussein's chemical and biological arsenal.

The head of the UN Special Commission on Iraq (Unscom), Richard Butler, conceded failure at the end of a four-day mission to Baghdad to gain unrestricted access to all suspected weapons sites.

"With respect to palaces they're just saying we can't go to them at all," Mr Butler said after talks with Iraq's deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz.

"I told Tariq Aziz that that decision was something that I would have to report to the [UN] Security Council, because it did constitute a derogation from the council's insistence that Unscom should be able to go anywhere any time."

Mr Butler was due to leave Baghdad on Tuesday to present his report to the Security Council on Thursday. The Iraqi government told him it would defend its position to the council, but Mr Butler said that he "gravely doubted" Baghdad's views would be accepted.

It was a dismal end to what Mr Butler had described as the "defining moment" for Unscom. Analysts said the breakdown of talks was bound to raise tensions in the Gulf.

The United States has not ruled out the use of air strikes to make Iraq comply with weapons inspections. US forces in the Gulf were reinforced in October and November during an earlier crisis when Baghdad sought to stop Americans taking part in UN weapons inspection teams.

Hopes rose in Unscom when Mr Butler was called for unscheduled talks with Mr Aziz last Sunday. But Mr Butler complained that he "didn't hear anything that was terribly new".

Iraq needs Unscom's approval before the stringent economic sanctions imposed after President Saddam's 1990 invasion of Kuwait can be lifted.

Mr Butler reported progress in gaining access for his inspection teams to some of 20-odd "sensitive sites", which include military bases. But Baghdad has refused to negotiate over more than 40 palaces.

● The US military is to vaccinate all 2.4 million active and reserve troops against the lethal anthrax biological agent, the US defence secretary, William Cohen, said on Monday.

The immunisations — six shots over 18 months and boosters — will begin next summer with 100,000 US troops in the Gulf and the Korean peninsula. The Pentagon claims Iraq and North Korea have developed anthrax as a weapon.

Iraq said the programme was part of a campaign to rally hostility against Baghdad.

Germ readiness, page 16

Passive smoking 'does kill'

Stephen Bates in Brussels

PASSIVE smoking is a threat to public health and kills more than 22,000 people a year in Europe, researchers funded by the European Commission claimed this week.

The research, by an independent panel of medical specialists from several European Union countries, was based on existing statistical and toxicological evidence. It concluded that the risks caused to non-smokers by inhaling smoke from others' cigarettes contribute significantly to the incidence of lung cancer, heart disease, and respiratory and ear infections.

The researchers estimate that non-smokers inhale the equivalent of two cigarettes a day, and that nearly 40 per cent of the European adult population — perhaps 180 million people — is exposed to other people's tobacco smoke on a regular basis.

The research, published in Brussels on Monday, claims that pregnant women and young children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of passive smoking. The children of smokers are statistically much more likely to suffer from pneumonia, bronchitis and glue ear — the commonest cause of childhood deafness.

It is estimated that 40 per cent of French women smoke during pregnancy, compared with 25 per cent in Britain. The report claims they run a much greater risk of miscarriage and their children run a higher risk of dying in infancy.

Anne Charlton, a cancer specialist from Manchester university and one of the report's contributors, said: "There is evidence that both inter-uterine and childhood exposure to passive smoking increases the risk of various cancers."

The report was drawn up following an advertising campaign last year by the tobacco company Philip Morris Europe, which claimed that passive smoking was no more dangerous than drinking milk or eating biscuits. Its message was that second-hand smoking was not really "a meaningful health risk to people who have chosen not to smoke".

The campaign was aimed directly at the EU's attempts to ban tobacco advertising, and the latest research was funded as part of the EU's attempt to hit back. The report's 30 contributors include cancer specialists, toxicologists, epidemiologists, paediatricians, public health advisers and anti-smoking campaigners.

The report claims that tobacco companies' own scientific advisers tend to include biologists, pharmacologists and statisticians rather than medical practitioners.





A Palestinian activist and his son join in an armed protest by the Islamic resistance movement Hamas. The rally was held by students at Gaza City's Islamic university on Monday PHOTO: FAYEZ NURELDINE

Carlos the Jackal goes on trial

Alex Duval Smith in Paris

CARLOS the Jackal, who for 20 years was the world's most wanted terrorist, went on trial before a jury last week unrepentantly declaring his occupation as "professional revolutionary in the Leninist tradition".

Betraying no sign that three years of solitary confinement in French cells had constrained his view of his own sex appeal, or mellowed his political fervour, the 48-year-old Venezuelan, overweight, with gold-rimmed pilot glasses, grey hair and moustache, oozed self-confidence as he took charge of proceedings at the closely guarded Paris assizes court.

"My name is Ilich Ramírez Sánchez . . . My profession is professional revolutionary," he told the court. "The world is my domain. My last address was Khartoum in Sudan." He was brought from there to Paris by French agents on August 13, 1994.

He faces a charge of murdering two French secret policemen and injuring another after they brought an informer to identify him at a Latin Quarter flat on June 27, 1975.

Ramírez, who has been linked to 80 other terrorism deaths in the 1970s and 1980s, was found guilty of the charge in his absence in 1992, and sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment. But French law allows him a retrial after capture.

The court threw out his argument that he could not be tried in France because he was taken there in August 1994 without extradition documents, after being captured in Sudan.

On Monday Ramírez took over his own defence after his three lawyers resigned. They claimed that the investigation into the three killings of which he is accused was botched to conceal state secrets.

Ramírez's chief counsel, Isabelle Coutant Peyre, said: "There are gaping holes in the case . . . and I would not be respecting my oath as a lawyer — of acting with dignity, conscience, probity and humanity — if I remained in the court."

After a furious exchange with the judge, Yves Corneloup, Ramírez paid tribute to Ms Coutant Peyre, calling her "a true Frenchwoman, with that sense of courage which made France's greatness". He added: "I no longer have a lawyer. This is illegal."

There was a break as another lawyer was sought, and another break after the new lawyer, Olivier Maudret, asked for a one-week suspension to study the file. The judge rejected the request, saying the court was not to blame for the resignations.

In the run-up to the trial, Ms Coutant Peyre made repeated requests for eyewitnesses to be called, new ballistic tests to be carried out, and classified information to be provided by the Territory Surveillance Directorate, to which the officers belonged.

The trial is the first of six Carlos may face for his alleged role in terrorist crimes that claimed 17 French lives between 1979 and 1982.

Court stalls Gates's designs on Net

Mark Tran in New York

BILL GATES'S drive to dominate the Internet has been stalled after a United States federal judge barred his Microsoft company from requiring PC makers who license its dominant Windows computer operating software to accept its browser software for using the Net.

The temporary move by district judge Thomas Jackson is a serious setback for the software giant. It may further delay the launch of Microsoft's new operating system, Windows 98, which was meant to come out this year.

Microsoft is locked in a battle to overtake Netscape — its chief rival in the Internet browser wars — and has rapidly increased its share of the market by requiring computer manufacturers who install Microsoft's Windows operating system to include the company's Internet Explorer Web browser. In doing so Microsoft has provoked allegations that it is trying to replicate its near-monopoly in the supply of operating software used in personal computers.

The strong-arm tactics have allowed Microsoft to capture about 30 per cent of the browser market, when two years ago Netscape, with its Navigator system, had nearly 80 per cent. But Microsoft has infuriated the competition authorities and consumer groups.

The preliminary decision by Judge Jackson, in response to a government anti-trust petition, could not have come at a worse time for Microsoft. The updated Windows 98 operating system would have incorporated the Internet Explorer as part of an integrated desk-top system. Those plans will have to be placed on hold, as a final court decision is not likely until next June.

The government's suit asked Judge Jackson to stop Microsoft from forcing PC manufacturers to install its Internet Explorer browser as a condition for licensing Windows 95.

The US attorney-general, Janet Reno, said Microsoft had violated a 1995 anti-trust settlement, but the judge rejected a government request for a fine of $1 million a day in civil contempt charges if the company failed to comply.

In his ruling, Judge Jackson said: "The probability that Microsoft will not only continue to reinforce its operating system monopoly by its licensing practices, but might acquire another monopoly in the Internet browser market, is too great to tolerate indefinitely until the issue is finally resolved."

Ralph Nader, the consumer campaigner, has accused Microsoft of using bullying tactics to intimidate its rivals and has voiced concern that it will translate its dominance of the PC software industry into control over news and information, particularly after Mr Gates's decision to invest heavily in cable television and the television internet company WebTV.

Mr Nader declared himself unimpressed with the court ruling. It "does little to deter Microsoft's arrogant and predatory business practices, which will be the focus of other investigations by the justice department and the state attorneys-general", he said.

Microsoft said it was confident that once the court had reviewed all the facts it would agree Microsoft had complied with the 1995 settlement, "and that Microsoft's integration of Internet Explorer with Windows 95 is good for consumers".

Racist killer given death sentence

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

A WHITE man who killed an Asian has become the first murderer in California to be sentenced to death for a racist crime. A judge in the state's conservative Orange county, where racial sentiments run especially high, confirmed the jury's recommendation in the case of Gunner Lindberg, aged 22, who in 1996 stabbed a Vietnamese youth he had never met before.

The death penalty was imposed because racist killings are included in a new law increasing capital offences.

The murder of Thien Minh Ly was a cold-blooded act. He was stabbed more than 50 times, 14 of them in the heart.

As Ly's parents wept, the judge read a letter that Lindberg had sent to a cousin. It began nonchalantly: "Oh, I killed a Jap a while ago. I stabbed him to death at Tustin high school. I walked right up to him and he was scared. I looked at him and said, 'Oh, I thought I knew you', and he got happy that he wasn't gonna get jumped, then I hit him.

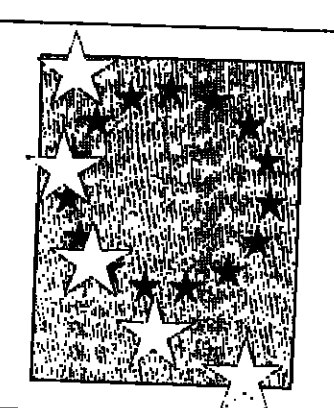
"I stabbed him in the side about seven or eight times. He rolled over a little so I stabbed his back 18 or 19 times. Then he lay flat and I slit his throat on his jugular vein."

Lindberg, a former shop assistant with a shaven head and goatee beard, has never expressed remorse, and remained passive throughout the sentencing. The dead man was aged 24 and a successful student at college, with the ambition of becoming the United States ambassador to Vietnam.

The case demonstrates the mounting tensions of racism in California, where various conservative political campaigns backed by the Republican governor, Pete Wilson, have worsened relations between whites and non-whites.

Mexicans are now said to regard California as the most racist border state, and attacks on Asians in California, where their population is higher than in any other state, have soared. In a backlash, Hispanics have flocked to the Democratic party.

Turkey taken off the EU members' menu



Europe this week

Martin Walker

HISTORY will not long remember the British squabble over its status as a not-quite member of the euro club, which tended to dominate the headlines of the European Union summit in Luxembourg. It will instead recall that the EU decided formally to embrace all the European members of the old Warsaw Pact to fulfil President George Bush's 1989 pledge of "a Germany whole and free in a Europe whole and free".

The formal process of accession will begin with all 10 of the old Warsaw Pact countries, and with Cyprus, next spring. But then half will be on the slow track, while the more advanced countries proceed immediately to detailed talks. The chosen few — Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Estonia — can expect to become full EU members within five to nine years. Cyprus, while enjoying that same accelerated procedure, is likely to suffer from the appalling row that broke out with Turkey.

This could yet lead to disaster, thanks to the factually correct but diplomatically provocative decision of the summit host, Luxembourg's prime minister, Jean-Claude Juncker, to stir the pot by saying that he could "not sit at the EU table with a country where torture is an everyday affair". Were torture an automatic disqualification for membership, then Britain's record in Northern Ireland, France's in Algeria and Spain's dirty war against the Basque ETA terrorists might not bear close examination.

Nor has the unsavoury human rights record of post-communist Slovakia stopped it being admitted to the slow-track accession process to the EU which it shares with Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia and Lithuania. Economically, it probably makes sense to put these countries on a slower trajectory to membership. It will be difficult enough to accommodate the fast-track group.

Mesut Yilmaz, the Turkish prime minister, responded by saying that the document on enlargement clearly discriminated against Turkey. He told a news conference that Turkey would not attend a European conference in London in March as long as there were unacceptable conditions attached. He also announced that Ankara was freezing its political dialogue with the EU.

Turkey suffered further snubs beyond the torture accusations. As current president of the Council of Ministers, Juncker also said that the EU would now press on with accession negotiations for Cyprus, regardless of any Turkish objections. "We cannot admit to the EU a country which has border disputes with another member state," he added, echoing Britain's call for Turkey to submit its Aegean sea dispute with Greece to the International Court of Justice at The Hague.

The European rebuff to Turkey is fraught with international complications, after Turkey was also virtually driven out of last week's Islamic conference in Iran because of its new military co-operation agreement with Israel. It also sets up new trouble between Europe and the United States, which is a strong advocate of Turkey's right to special consideration as a Nato ally in a key strategic position between Europe and the Middle East. The Turkish drama had threatened to overshadow the EU summit after Greece's threats to veto plans to invite Turkey to next year's London conference. This was devised as a way of keeping Turkey's hopes of membership alive but without admitting the largely Islamic country to what now looks like the Christian club of Europe.



Shelter from the storm . . . Palace butlers at the fractious European Union summit in Luxembourg PHOTO: PETER DEJONG

The stakes are now very high, with Cyprus apparently ready to take delivery of a Russian-supplied anti-aircraft missile system. Turkey has already threatened to fire on the ship carrying the missiles if passes the Bosporus. Yilmaz runs a shaky minority government, where the courts are provocatively seeking to ban the large Islamic party. Turkey's customs union with the EU has been fine for EU exports, which rose from $27 billion to $38 billion in the past two years, but Turkey's exports have barely improved, and the country now faces an $11 billion trade deficit.

Amid these powerful historical currents swirled the flotsam of the British government's right of access to the single currency club (of which it is not a member). This took up by far the most time. Thanks to the German chancellor, Helmut Kohl, leaning heavily on the French, Britain reached a face-saving deal on its claim to join the Euro-X group that will manage the single currency and under which "whenever issues of common interest are discussed, the ministers of all 15 member states will participate".

It was a fudge that stores up serious questions for the future, not least on how the countries in and out of the euro zone can co-ordinate policy if they are hit by a major currency crisis. The right to define that key phrase "issues of common interest" remains vague, since exchange rates are under the Maastricht treaty issues for the euro members.

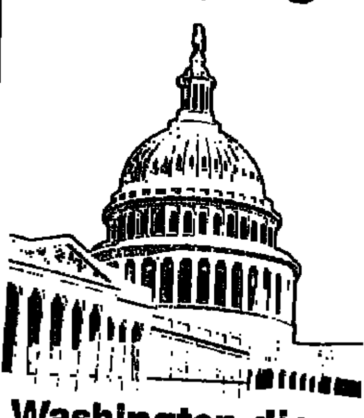
So it now seems that Britain will not be part of the crucial euro zone deliberations over policies towards the dollar or the yen. And if British objections force the matter into the formal Ecofin council of finance ministers, when it comes to exchange rate questions, Britain will not, as a non-member of the euro zone, have a vote. Perhaps most important, as and when Britain joins the single currency, it may not be able to attend the meetings of the euro group when it decides the common negotiating position on the exchange rate at which the British pound joins the euro.

Britain conceded a principle it had earlier opposed, that "the ministers of the states participating in the euro area have the right to meet informally among themselves to discuss issues connected with their shared specific responsibilities for the single currency".

Keen to show themselves more reasonable than the Tories, Blair's spokesmen claimed to have carried their point through "amicable discussions in a spirit of unity that we are keen to preserve". Despite a day of sharp exchanges, Britain tried to avoid a row that could sour its forthcoming turn at the EU presidency. It just about managed, but the Turkish crisis will loom ominously over Blair's stewardship of Europe.

Le Monde, page 13

Right plagued by birthday doubts



Washington diary

Martin Kettle

SOME 25 years ago, just as the Apollo astronauts were packing up and leaving the surface of the Moon for the last time, an earthly revolution was also beginning to take place. The two revolutionaries were a pair of Washington congressional aides named Paul Weyrich and Edwin Feulner who, at the beginning of 1973, with the help of $250,000 donated by the brewing magnate Joe Coors, began to establish the Heritage Foundation.

Today, the foundation is entitled to consider itself the political equivalent of Microsoft. Though not as well known as Bill Gates's software giant, the institution came from nowhere in the 1970s, latched on to a political market that was ripe for change, and perfected a set of easy-to-understand programmes that have swept — with almost ridiculous ease — into almost every country in the world, with the exceptions of places such as Iraq and North Korea. It even spawned a conservative nerd culture not unlike Gates's anorak-wearing legions.

The Heritage Foundation was the intellectual engine of Reaganism and the conservative counter-revolution of the 1980s. At its heart was a passionate belief in the moral and practical virtue of possessive individualism, which reflected an emotional and intellectual hostility to the role of government in social and economic policy, and which focused in particular on reducing, and in some cases eradicating, the welfare state in order to finance tax cuts.

In the United States, in particular, it might be thought that the foundation would look back on a job well done during the Reagan years in which Heritage's 1980 Mandate For Leadership became a Reaganite set text; would congratulate itself on the entrapment of a Democratic president as a hapless latter-day advocate of important parts of their agenda of past; and would exult in the continuing electoral ascendancy of the Republican revolutionaries who seem likely to control the Congress for many years to come.

And yet the foundation's 25th anniversary is being marked in a profoundly ambivalent period of self-examination that is strikingly at odds with the record. Few who see it in action can doubt that the foundation remains almost without peer as a conservative lobbying and advocacy group. With a budget of $29 million, and 160 employees, the institution under Feulner's continuing presidency is still a hard-working, hustling and immensely impressive operation.

Nevertheless it is hard not to notice a tone of disappointment in much of what the foundation is saying to itself amid the birthday celebrations. It is as though the constant injunctions never to be satisfied and always to be vigilant have blinded this rightwing organisation to its own achievements. For instance, it was strange to listen to Feulner last week complaining that "the liberal welfare state confiscates ever-larger portions of our income" as though his foundation had had no chance to have an impact on policy-making over the past two decades. And it was downright bizarre to hear Margaret Thatcher — far more respected nowadays in the US than in Britain — whingeing about the power of "the fashionable liberal consensus" as though the Thatcher-Reagan counter-revolution had never taken place.

Feulner's anniversary observation that "so entrenched has the liberal welfare state become that it takes genuine intellectual and moral courage to challenge its élitist, statist philosophy" would seem extraordinary in the light of all that has happened to the post-war settlement in the past two decades were it not for the fact that this is self-evidently how such campaigners see themselves. Everyone else thinks that they have won, and thinks that they won long ago. They, on the other hand, still see themselves as the beleaguered minority that they ceased to be long ago.

However, this self-perception of the right has important practical political consequences. The reluctance to see Bill Clinton's weakness for what it is, for instance, helps to drive the right into acts both of tactical small-mindedness and of ideological grand excess. It fires the Congressional right's absolute reluctance to make political compromises with Clinton over anything to do with affirmative action or the tobacco settlement, issues on which Clinton is in the process of outmanoeuvring them in an election year.

And it blinds them to the danger of attitudes such as that expressed recently by the fashionable rightwing guru Charles Murray, who extols "the coalition of people who simply want to be left alone" and for whom "government is the problem". In the mouth of an economist or politician thinking about the burden of personal taxation, these words may sound relatively unthreatening. But in the mouth of an Oklahoma bomber they can be a recipe for destruction and madness.

If the conservative Washington think-tanks and the conservative Republican politicians want to turn their misgivings into serious unhappiness, then they should stick with this kind of talk. If they look at their own achievements, they will prosper. But if they persuade themselves that there is nothing wrong with the conservative revolution that another bout of even more revolutionary activity will not solve, then America's conservatives will risk finding themselves in the same predicament as their British counterparts.

Holocaust auction shames the Dutch

Ian Traynor in The Hague

THE wedding rings of concentration camp victims went for a song. The table silver of perished middle-class Jewish families went quietly to the highest bidder. Gold watches, strings of pearls, earrings and necklaces — all once the property of Amsterdam's prosperous pre-war Jewish community — were sold secretly, and at way below the market price, to Dutch government employees more than 20 years after the Holocaust.

The latest tawdry tale of wartime Germany's neighbours and victims profiteering from the crimes of the Nazis has emerged in the Netherlands, triggering shame, disgust and embarrassment.

The revelations of government functionaries eagerly queuing to bid for valuables plundered from Dutch Jews in the 1940s have exposed the darker aspects of the country's Nazi dealings during and after the second world war.

The Amsterdam weekly magazine De Groene Amsterdamer, citing retired civil servants, reported last week that until the late 1960s the Dutch finance ministry still had a large hoard of gold, silver, jewellery and household valuables looted from Dutch Jews in the 1940s.

The property was never reclaimed because the owners were murdered in the Nazi death camps. But instead of publicising the treasure trove and handing it over, the finance ministry organised a clandestine auction among its employees.

"We now know that around 1968 to 1969 a sale took place, at the taxation values of 1958, among the personnel," a finance ministry spokesman, Ronald Florisson, confirmed. "An intensive investigation is being launched."

"Who would give his wife a present of earrings taken from a Jewish woman gassed in Auschwitz?" asked the daily De Volkskrant newspaper.

The answer seems plain. The demand for a slice of the loot was so great that officials drew lots to determine who would take part in the sale. Whistle-blowers, outraged at the goings-on in the finance ministry, told De Groene Amsterdamer that some of the successful bidders were "dancing for joy" in the office.

"The things were laid out and sold off as bargains. My colleagues let anyone see what they had bought," said an unnamed retired finance ministry official. "Of course, these people knew that what they were buying had come from the Jews. These people had no feelings."

Every February the Dutch mark the strikes and protests that accompanied the anti-Semitic pogroms of February 1941, celebrating the national self-image of anti-Nazi resistance. But the revelations have tarnished that self-image and triggered investigations that are likely to expose more unsavoury details of Dutch banks dealing in Nazi gold, of trading in looted art and of the post-war bureaucratic jungle created to frustrate Holocaust survivors' efforts to recover their belongings.

Dutch Jewish leaders say the auction of valuables is "the tip of the iceberg" and that many more Dutch benefited from Jewish losses during and after the war.

The exposure of government corruption is due to the discovery of records from a Nazi-controlled Dutch bank earlier this month. The so-called Liro archives had long been thought lost or destroyed. But about one-quarter of the files — detailing the deposits made by Dutch Jews before being shipped off to the camps — have been recovered.

Liro is an acronym for the Lippmann-Rosenthal bank of Amsterdam, founded by Amsterdam Jews in 1859. The bank was taken over and closed down by the Nazis in July 1940 after the German occupation two months earlier.

It was reopened in 1941, under the control of Dutch Nazi collaborators, to act as the main depository for expropriated Jewish accounts, money and valuables. The idea was that Dutch Jews would be more willing to place their valuables with what had been a well-known Jewish bank.

At least 13,000 deposits were made and the bank opened a branch at the Westerbork transit camp, from where Dutch Jews were sent to the death camps. Besides money and bank accounts, from 1942 they had to surrender valuables — gold, silver, jewellery, coin collections and *objets d'art* — to the bank.

After the war, the Dutch government used the deposits and the records for compensation claims and restitution. But much of the personal effects remained unclaimed, and experts are examining the files to establish what "surplus" goods were still in the finance ministry vaults in the late 1960s before they were sold to employees.

Neo-Nazis 'liberate' German zones to keep out foreigners

NEO-NAZIS have set up "liberated zones" in at least 25 towns and cities in Germany, barring foreigners from clubs, cafés, pubs, discos and even certain streets, the government commissioner for foreigners reported last week, *writes Ian Traynor in Königswinter*

Alarmed at the sinister development, which she described as unique in Europe, Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobsen, an MP from the Free Democrats, a small partner in Chancellor Helmut Kohl's ruling coalition, said neo-Nazi networks were using cyberspace to notify followers of "foreigner-free" institutions.

"These are not 'liberated zones'. In fact, they're occupied zones," she said.

Presenting her annual report on the conditions experienced by the 7.3 million registered foreigners in Germany — the highest number of any country in the European Union — Ms Schmalz-Jacobsen said that the government had given multiple signals in the past year that made life more difficult for immigrants.

She reported that 2,323 racist crimes took place last year and said the figures for this year would be no better. "There's not a day that goes by without such an incident. But this part of the everyday German routine seems to be ignored by the general public.

"There are towns and urban districts, mainly in eastern Germany, triumphally declared 'national liberated zones' by rightwing radicals. Foreign residents and visitors are advised not to leave their homes after dark."

Her spokesman, Georgios Tsapanos, said he had seen secret neo-Nazi electronic mailboxes proclaiming: "We are pleased to report today that such and such a club has now been liberated."

The exclusion orders applied not only to foreigners, but frequently also to gays, left-wingers, drop-outs and others, he said, adding that researchers studying the problem had compiled a list of at least 25 towns and cities, mainly in the former East Germany, where the racist rules applied. "The fear and the pressure this puts on young foreigners is enormous," said Mr Tsapanos.

Ms Schmalz-Jacobsen said she was shocked to learn of the liberated zones. "There is xenophobia in other European countries. There is xenophobia in western Germany. But this is rather unique," she said.

The interior ministers of the 16 German states recently warned of the growing threat of rightwing terror, and Mr Tsapanos said that there were about 7,000 offences last year involving rightwing extremism — including Nazi sloganeering, which is banned in Germany. That represents a 10 per cent drop on the previous year's figures.

There were 11 race-related attempted murders, 307 assaults and 27 offences involving explosives and arson, mainly against immigrant hostels.

Meanwhile the German army is embroiled in its worst scandal of several this year after a veteran neo-Nazi leader and convicted terrorist was invited to address officers at the country's most prestigious officer training academy.

The Week in Britain James Lewis

A little knowledge no longer a dangerous thing, says Blair

ALTHOUGH the Blair administration has so far seemed determined to use its army of spin doctors to manage the flow of information, it has now published proposals for a Freedom of Information Bill which has conceded the first principle of a modern democracy, the citizen's "right to know".

The promised law will apply not only to central government but to its agencies, quangos, local authorities, the National Health Service, privatised utilities and firms carrying out public duties under contract. And the public will have the right of access in most cases to original documents, not doctored summaries.

The system will be policed by an independent information commissioner, who will have the power to compel officials to release information. To deny a request, those officials will have to be able to prove that substantial harm would result from the release of information.

Though the proposals were rather bolder than expected, advocates of more open government were not wholly satisfied. There was disappointment over the exclusion of the security services from the law, and over the decision not to shorten, from 30 years, the length of time before public records such as Cabinet papers are automatically released.

Controversy is likely to centre on the treatment of advice given to ministers by civil servants. Whitehall mandarins have argued that to release such information would drag civil servants into the political arena and compromise their ability to give frank advice. Under the new law, in such cases the burden of proof will lie with those asking for the information.

Despite misgivings, however, the proposals were broadly welcomed even by the sternest critics of obsessive Whitehall secrecy. The most closed government of the developed world promises to open up.

ANOTHER STEP in the same direction was taken by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, who acted to prevent the proposed Data Protection Bill from being used by the rich and powerful to block legitimate investigate journalism.

The new bill, which is being introduced into British law alongside the European Convention on Human Rights, is to give effect to a European Union data protection directive that will give the public the right to inspect electronic data which is held on them. This would give individuals access to files held on them by media organisations.

Mr Straw, however, intends to give the media a "public interest" defence if the need to comply with the directive is not consistent with "the reasonable exercise of journalistic activities".

THE GOVERNMENT'S relationship with the BBC hit a new low when Labour's spin doctors launched an unprecedented attack on John Humphrys, an interviewer on the flagship "Today" radio programme and one of the corporation's most respected senior broadcasters.

Dave Hill, Labour's chief media spokesman, threatened to sever relations with the programme over an interview between Mr Humphrys and the Social Services Secretary, Harriet Harman, who sought to defend the Government's plan to cut benefits to single parents.

Since Ms Harman was vehemently opposed to such cuts only a year ago, the interview was inevitably going to be a rough ride. And so it proved to be. She refused at least 13 times to answer a question put by Mr Humphrys, but Mr Hill complained that "she was never permitted to develop a single answer".

The BBC and "Today" were often the subject of complaints by Tory ministers in previous administrations, notably Lord Tebbit and Lord Lawson, but never before has a party resorted to arm-twisting or threatened to limit access to ministers.

RELATIVES of suffering patients unable to take decisions for themselves may be allowed to authorise the withdrawal of life-prolonging treatment under proposals unveiled in a consultative paper by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine.

He favours legislation which would set up a statutory framework for people to make "living wills" — directives about future treatment — and appoint relatives or friends to take medical decisions for them if they later become incapacitated.

Case law has established that doctors are bound by living wills, but the suggested new legislation would allow patients to spell out their wishes with greater certainty. Doctors would not, however, be obliged to carry out treatment which was illegal, and ministers continue to stress that they are opposed to euthanasia.

Clearer rules would enable doctors to give as well as withdraw treatment without fear of falling foul of the law. And decisions about whether to withdraw artificial feeding from patients judged to be in a persistent vegetative state would no longer have to be decided by the courts.

A HUMANOID successor to Tamagotchi, the virtual reality pet, sparked a storm of protest and a campaign for its withdrawal by the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF). Kiniko the Fosterling, a foster "child" which the owner nurtures and raises for adoption, was condemned by the BAAF as "hurtful and insulting to foster children and foster parents".

The importers insisted that it was "a nice toy". Stocks have now run out.



GUARDIAN WEEKLY December 21

Minister's tax row deepens

Alex Brummer, Roger Cole and Anne Perkins

GEOFFREY ROBINSON insisted last Sunday that he had emerged unscathed from the investigations into his financial affairs, dismissing Tory calls for his resignation as Paymaster General.

"I am a millionaire and I am delighted also to be a businessman who is a minister in a Labour government, and I now want to get on with my job in the Treasury of helping to build a more successful economy," Mr Robinson said in a statement issued through the Treasury.

His comments came as the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, led Labour's robust public defence of the embattled minister. But attempts to fend off Tory attacks were weakened by a television interview with the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, who appeared to line up with those who have accused Mr Robinson of hypocrisy over his use of a tax-avoiding trust, while a member of a Treasury team working to close tax loopholes. Mr Prescott said: "You may argue that the politician said one thing and perhaps did another."

Mr Robinson's statement came after a day of intense political activity following fresh newspaper disclosures about transactions carried out by Orion, his family trust based in Guernsey.

The disclosures showed that Orion had acquired shares in UK companies at Mr Robinson's suggestion, despite his earlier claim that he had no influence over its decisions. The latest revelations — about shares in Coventry City football club and TransTec, Mr Robinson's technology firm — prompted a fresh assault from the shadow chancellor, Peter Lilley.

Mr Lilley said: "Geoffrey Robinson's credibility has been destroyed by the steady flow of revelations about his financial affairs. His position is now untenable. It is time for him to go."

The Robinson statement claiming that "nothing new of substance has been found" followed a campaign by Labour spin-doctors and Mr Robinson himself to limit the damage. Labour asserts that the affair is merely part of a Tory campaign designed to discredit the business leaders who have joined Tony Blair's government.

Senior Labour sources say that in the case of each transaction, the Orion Trust acted on the advice of independent financial experts, and that Mr Robinson had no direct involvement.

However, Mr Robinson is steadfastly refusing to reveal the identity of the independent trustees or the terms of their mandate.

Londonderry petrol bomb riots 'plotted'

John Mullin

EXTREMISTS in Northern Ireland were accused by the Royal Ulster Constabulary of planning and orchestrating a night of violence in Londonderry last Saturday, when more than 1,000 petrol bombs were thrown at police.

In the worst violence in Northern Ireland since the IRA restored its ceasefire in July, RUC officers fired 169 plastic baton rounds in an effort to quell the trouble.

Meanwhile the leader of the Ulster Unionists, David Trimble, appeared to indicate he might after all have talks with the Sinn Fein president, Gerry Adams, if he could be convinced Mr Adams had turned his back on violence and embraced democratic politics.

Mr Trimble, who has so far refused direct talks with Mr Adams at the multi-party Belfast negotiations, said in an Irish television interview: "We have seen in the past people who have forsaken terrorism and genuinely changed into democrats."

The move had been discussed with his party's leadership last week and reflects Mr Trimble's determination not to appear intransigent.

The Londonderry flashpoint was the Apprentice Boys' annual parade to celebrate the siege of Londonderry in 1698. Up to 3,000 took part, infuriating nationalists on the Catholic Bogside.


A vehicle set on fire by nationalist youths in Northern Ireland's worst outbreak of violence since the IRA ceasefire PHOTO: PAUL McERLANE

RUC Superintendent Paul Leighton claimed the violence had been planned in advance. Fire crews, fearful for their own safety, had to stand aside as the violence raged and businesses were devastated. An 11-year-old boy hit on the head by a stone had to be taken to Belfast for specialist treatment.

The clean-up operation continued throughout the day. Hijacked buses and cars which had been burned out were towed away, and businesses were patching up damaged shops.

The RUC said it had information that a small group of hardline republican activists was planning trouble. Security officers blamed a release of pressure building up over the slow pace of progress at Stormont.

John Hume, the local Social Democratic and Labour Party MP, said: "The people who planned this are not interested in the people of Derry. The image of the city which has gone round the world is of the media footage of petrol bombs being thrown."

● Mr Adams, Martin McGuinness and other Sinn Fein officials met the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, at 10 Downing Street last week, the first time a Sinn Fein leader had passed through the world's most famous front door since Michael Collins signed David Lloyd George's partition agreement in 1921. Both Mr Adams and Mr Blair described the gesture as a risk worth taking.

Royal send-off for yacht

THE most potent symbol of Britain's imperial past was pensioned off last week, to the strains of A Life On The Ocean Wave and the noiseless shuffle of naval plimsoll on teak deck, *writes Luke Harding*.

In a ceremony heady with nostalgia, the Queen and 14 other members of the royal family bade farewell to the Royal Yacht Britannia at Portsmouth naval base.

After seven months of confusion, the yacht was finally decommissioned 44 years and more than one million sea miles after its launch. As it is not to be replaced, the ceremony brought to an end a royal tradition which began in 1660 when Charles II was given a yacht by the Dutch East India Company.

The Queen was piped aboard the 412ft yacht for the last time, greeted by its captain, Commodore Anthony Morrow, and given a tour of the royal apartments (furnished in chintzy 1950s suburban style, and with every bed a single) and the engine room before sitting down for lunch.

Even before the royal group descended on Portsmouth's South Railway Jetty, the ship's crew had been busy. They had polished the brasses until their arms ached and reswabbed the decks — futile tasks demanded by protocol which made the royal yacht, which last year cost £10 million to run, a synonym for Soviet-style overmanning and made its survival unlikely.

The Defence Secretary, George Robertson, announced that the ship's final mooring would be either the Manchester Ship Canal or Leith, Edinburgh. A plea by Princess Anne to have Britannia scuttled has been swept aside.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY December 21 1997

Doctors to drive future health care

David Brindle

MINISTERS last week won widespread support for their National Health Service white paper, promising to modernise the service by putting family doctors in the driving seat of changes which will shift much health care from hospitals to community services.

Crucially, fundholding doctors, who at present can command specialist services for their patients, declared they would not oppose the proposals, despite confirmation that fundholding in its present form would be scrapped within 16 months.

The white paper appeared to offer something for all. Its dry, technical plans for restructuring the service were spiced by the addition of populist measures.

These included: confirmation of the setting-up of NHS Direct, a 24-hour telephone advice service to be staffed by nurses and available nationally from 2000; plans to link all hospitals and doctors' surgeries by computer, enabling instant access to patient records and test results; and a guarantee that all patients with suspected cancer will see a specialist within two weeks of referral. The guarantee will apply to suspected breast cancer cases by April 1999 and other cases a year later.

The structural changes will also take effect in April 1999. Under these, the commissioning of health care will be gradually taken over by "primary care groups" led by general practitioners and community nurses, each representing communities of about 100,000 people. They will replace commissioning by fundholders and health authorities.

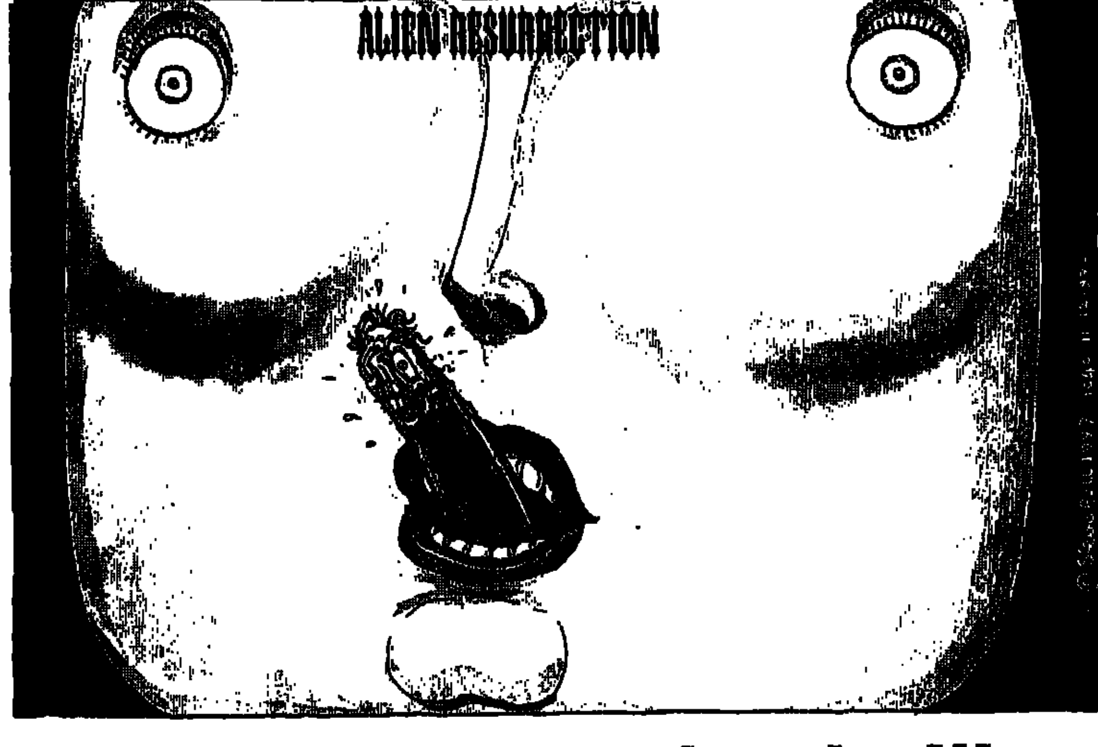
The Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, told the House of Commons that the white paper was a turning point for the health service. It would mean abolition of the internal market system, introduced by the Conservatives in 1991, which had "set doctor against doctor and hospital against hospital". While the separation of the planning and provision of health care would remain, "we will end competition and replace it with a new statutory duty of partnership so that local health services pull together rather than pull apart".

Mr Dobson confirmed that he expected the changes to realise £1 billion cumulative savings in red-tape costs by the next general election.

The Conservative shadow health secretary, John Maples, welcomed what he described as retention of many of the principles of the internal market. But he said the primary care groups must be allowed to devolve budgets to individual doctors' practices, as with current fundholding. "If your commissioning groups do not have the same powers, they will not achieve the same results or the better ones you aspire to," Mr Maples told Mr Dobson.

Fundholders, who make up 58 per cent of all family doctors, are likely to be mollified by reference in the white paper to groups having freedom to agree "practice-level incentive arrangements" linked to "indicative" individual budgets.

There was an enthusiastic reception for the white paper from NHS interest groups. Stephen Thornton, chief executive of the NHS Confederation, which represents health authorities and trusts, said the plans were "very positive".



Benefit cuts spark rebellion

Michael White, Ewen MacAskill and Anne Perkins

TONY BLAIR'S honeymoon with his own party ended dramatically last week when 47 Labour MPs defied a three-line whip to stage an unexpectedly emphatic vote against a £10 cut in benefit to new single parents.

Coupled with 14 abstentions and the resignation of three MPs — junior minister Malcolm Chisholm and unpaid "bagmen" Gordon Prentice and Mick Clapham — from their government posts to join the first backbench revolt of the Blair era, it was a grim night for the Prime Minister.

He had staked considerable authority on facing down the rebellion in the name of New Labour solidarity behind his election manifesto, only to see the key vote, a Labour amendment to the Social Security Bill, carried with Tory support. The majority was 457 votes to a damaging 107 — including Liberal Democrats, assorted nationalists and Labour rebels.

As another unpaid parliamentary aide, Alice Mahon, was sacked for joining the revolt, the government chief whip, Nick Brown, said that all No voters would be interviewed and given a "yellow card". At least three outspoken critics, Ken Livingstone, John Marek and Bob Wareing, would be reported to the party's general secretary for particularly "obnoxious" conduct.

The act of defiance came despite an impassioned Commons defence of her Social Security Bill by Harriet Harman, and arm-twisting by whips and loyalists, desperate to uphold the Government's commitment to stand by "hard choices".

"I have been arguing for 15 years in this House that lone parents are poor . . . because of the absence of opportunity to work," Ms Harman said. "This Government is determined to tackle the barriers that lone parents face when they want to work.

"We should be concerned about generations growing up without the example of work. Lone parents want to set an example. Life is about work, not just about claiming benefits."

Heartened by the size of the rebellion, Mr Livingstone said: "You could not find a single Labour member who was proud to vote for the Government tonight." Many loyalists would agree with that, but felt they owed their government their vote only seven months after it swept them into Westminster with a Commons majority of 179.

Initial cash savings are modest, barely £50 million in the first year, but Ms Harman had repeatedly told MPs that the strict spending limits they had inherited from John Major — and agreed to stick by — left no choice. "They've caused themselves a lot of trouble over very little money," said one Tory. "It's just macho stuff by Blair," said another. Many Labour MPs and ministers, up to cabinet rank, agreed.

Comment, page 12

Disabled face cash curbs

THE Government is seeking substantial cuts in disability benefits in order to switch money into health and education, a leaked government document confirmed last week, *writes David Brindle*.

The Social Security Secretary, Harriet Harman, is asking other Whitehall departments to come up with measures to help disabled people so that she has a "convincing story to tell" when the cuts impact, the document suggests.

The writer of the leaked document is believed to be Ursula Brennan, number three in the Department of Social Security.

The letter, sent to other departments, says: "The Government has made clear its aim to release resources from social security in order to spend more on health and education, and it is likely that a high proportion of the necessary savings will have to come from benefits paid to sick and disabled people . . . which account for a quarter of all benefits spending."

Manifesto commitments make it difficult to achieve equivalent savings in other policy areas, the writer states.

The cost of disability and sickness benefits has soared from £4.1 billion in 1982 to £23.5 billion, out of a total social security bill of some £100 billion. A review headed by junior minister Baroness Hollis is looking at taxing, means-testing or time-limiting the allowances. Industrial injuries benefit could be abolished and responsibility passed to employers.

Disability groups were outraged by the letter. Ian Bruce, director general of the Royal National Institute for the Blind, said: "I cannot believe that a government with so far a good track record on disability would be so hard-faced as to take money from disabled people."

In Brief

THE threat of large-scale pit closures and job losses in the run-up to Christmas was removed when contracts between the power generators and the main coal producer, RJB Mining, were extended to next June. The Conservatives denounced the deal as no more than a "stay of execution".

A FIRE broke out at terminal one of London's Heathrow airport, leading to the cancellation of more than 300 flights and gridlock on approach roads.

MASS Aids tests are being carried out on soldiers at Catterick Garrison in North Yorkshire following fears that two women have been infecting soldiers with the HIV virus.

ALAN CLARK, Conservative MP and celebrated diarist, is suing the London Evening Standard for publishing a spoof "Alan Clark's Secret Political Diary" in which the writer muses on driving at 180mph in Bayswater and describes Tory leader William Hague as leader of the "self-abuse Internet enthusiasts".

POLICE investigating allegations of physical and sexual abuse in South Wales dating back to 1973 expanded their inquiries to include a total of 33 local children's homes.

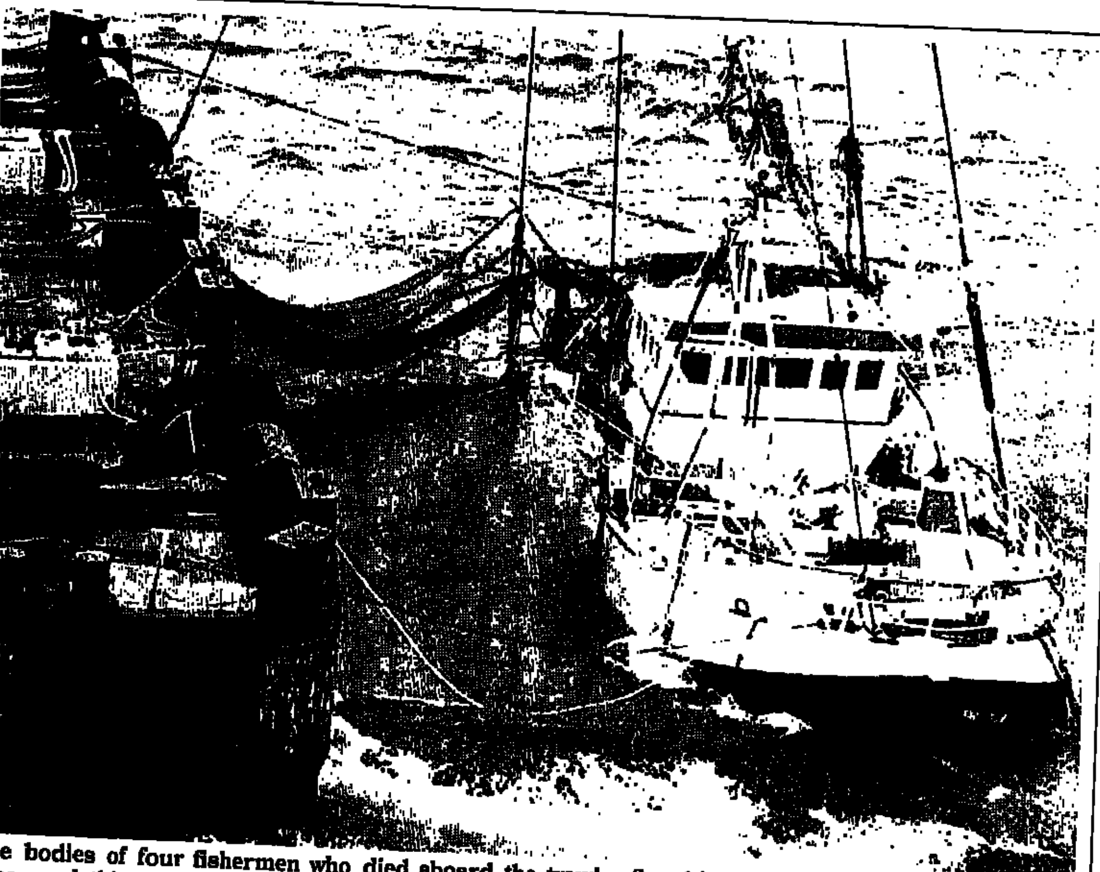
THE body of Karine Turner, aged 24, who along with her mother and daughter was murdered in the Luxor massacre last month, may have inadvertently been buried in Germany, said a coroner in Halifax. The body of Ms Turner's mother had been mistakenly flown to Switzerland but was recovered before burial.

ELTON JOHN handed a cheque for £20 million — the first instalment of proceeds from the sale of his single, "Candle in the Wind '97" — to the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund. The song has sold 33 million copies worldwide.

ESTHER McLAUGHLIN, a former assistant director of social services at the London Borough of Southwark, was awarded record sex discrimination damages of £234,000 by an industrial tribunal, after she was sidelined, bullied and sacked in a "sham redundancy".

THE BBC licence fee will increase by 6.6 per cent to £97.50 for a colour television, the Government announced. The extra money, in line with the recommendations of a funding report commissioned by the previous Government, will be used to launch the BBC's digital services in 1998, which will include home shopping and access to the Internet.

LUCY ASKEW, Britain's oldest woman, has died aged 114.



The bodies of four fishermen who died aboard the trawler Sapphire when it sank in October were recovered this week after the wreck was lifted from the sea bed 12 miles off the northeast coast of Scotland. The £500,000 salvage operation was paid for by the public after the Government said that it was not responsible for the recovery of the men's bodies. The Sapphire was due to be sunk at sea

Tit-for-tat meat import ban

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE Government on Monday engaged in tit-for-tat retaliation against meat imports from the European Union after the EU delayed regulations forcing continental abattoirs to meet the same slaughtering standards for cattle and sheep as those in Britain.

The Agriculture Minister, Jack Cunningham, imposed the ban on beef, sheep and goat meat from which materials suspected of harbouring BSE — including skulls, eyes, brains and spinal cords — have not been removed. All beef on the bone, including imports, was also banned this week under parliamentary orders.

Mr Cunningham said in Brussels: "I am not prepared to delay this any longer. All beef being imported into the UK will have to be treated in the same way as British beef."

A committee of EU vets decided to delay from January 1 to March 31 implementation of regulations — agreed by agriculture ministers last July — that "risk" materials should be removed.

The delay was to give time for additional research into whether the changes should also apply to beef on the bone or sheep and goats following recent scares. All member states except Britain voted for the delay, with at least six claiming they had no need of the regulations because they had never had a case of BSE.

Mr Cunningham, who has recently been criticised by farmers for banning beef on the bone despite minimal evidence of any health risk, sought to deflect criticism on to continental governments for "prevarication, obfuscation and delay" in bringing in the regulations.

The United States decided last weekend to ban all imports from Europe of live cattle and sheep, fresh meat and bonemeal until the BSE risk could be assessed.

The European Commission claimed the US was playing politics by imposing the ban following a series of trading disputes on other matters with the EU.

Mr Cunningham was unable to say how much beef would be affected, what penalties would be imposed and who would be held liable if imported meat evading the ban found its way into shops.

Environmental health officials said the long-threatened ban of beef on the bone would be unenforceable.

Anne Goodwin of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health said: "The regulations are a recipe for confusion and inconsistency. As drafted, they will mean that enforcement action can only be taken when the inspector sees the bone being sold to a customer."

The Ministry of Agriculture conceded that almost half of all beef imports come from Ireland and France, which already have regulations to remove risk material.

A third of the beef eaten in Britain is imported, amounting to nearly 140,000 tonnes last year.

● Thousands of haemophiliacs are being put at risk of infection by the disease linked to BSE because the Government and health authorities are not allowing patients to switch from clotting products produced from human blood to more expensive synthetic products, according to heads of treatment centres. Two batches of British-made blood products were recently recalled because victims of "new variant" Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease were among donors.

Fatal flaws in murder inquiry

Alan Travis

ELEVEN promising lines of inquiry have still not been followed up by police four years after the racist murder of the black schoolboy Stephen Lawrence at a London bus stop, according to a report published this week by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw.

The murder investigation suffered from serious shortcomings and failed to operate to an acceptable level, said the Police Complaints Authority in a preliminary report.

"Vital" witnesses were ignored, evidence linking suspects to other knife attacks was not properly followed up, while confusion in the handling of the identification evidence may have meant one attacker was overlooked. The police lost the confidence of the Lawrence family at an early stage and were unable to regain it.

Police claimed attempts to bring 18-year-old Stephen's killers to justice were blocked by a "wall of silence", but the report said local people came forward with valuable information soon after the killing.

"In general, the investigation has identified weaknesses in the leadership, direction and quality of work of the first murder investigation," it said.

"The quality of supervision of officers was poor, and assumptions were made about the standard of work being carried out that would not have withstood proper scrutiny."

Sir Paul Condon, the Metropolitan police commissioner, predicted that the case will be seen as a "watershed" which will lead to changes in the way murder inquiries are carried out by all police forces.

He said he deeply regretted that the "racist murder of Stephen Lawrence was not followed by the successful prosecution of his killers".

The report says there was no evidence of racist conduct by the police, or corruption or collusion with the suspects or members of their families.

However, Stephen's father, Neville Lawrence, said: "There can't be any conclusion about racism until the findings of the judicial inquiry. If there was no racism, why didn't the police do their duty on the night?"

The preliminary report acknowledges that without the determination of the Lawrence family to bring to justice their son's murderers — including a private prosecution — the mistakes were unlikely to have been revealed.

Underclass to know its place in revised social classification

John Ezard

A NEW pyramid of social class was proposed last week to replace the one devised 86 years ago.

The Economic and Social Research Council, which is recommending the change, "overwhelmingly" rejected the idea that social classification was obsolete as we prepare for the 21st century, but did recognise the emergence of an "underclass".

The change is recommended in a report from the research council to the Office of National Statistics. The chief novelty is in moving nurses up one class as "associate professionals", apparently because nursing is due to become all-graduate. Traffic wardens are put firmly in their place.

Examples are given for occupations at each tier of the pyramid:
1: Doctors, lawyers, scientists, and employers, administrators and managers in "large" organisations, ie, those with 25 or more staff;
2: Nurses, legal executives, laboratory technicians, other "associate professionals", employers, administrators and managers in smaller organisations, supervisors of intermediate staff;
3: Secretaries, sales reps, nursery nurses, computer operators and other intermediate occupations in administrative, clerical, sales and service work;
4: Driving instructors, builders, carpenters and other self-employed non-professionals;
5: Telephone fitters, plumbers and other supervisors and craft and related workers;
6: Lorry drivers, assembly line workers, traffic wardens and workers in routine occupations in manufacturing and services;
7: "All types of labourers, waiters and waitresses and cleaners" and other workers in elementary occupations in manufacturing and services;
8: The underclass of those who have never worked and the long-term unemployed or sick — as the council puts it, "their position is obviously the worst of all".

The higher up individuals are, the likelier they are to enjoy favourable terms for job security, pay, and pension, as well as more control over their work and better career prospects.

The report's author, Professor David Rose of Essex university, said: "It should lead to an improved understanding of how people's jobs — or lack of a job — affect their life chances and those of their children and dependants."

Constructing Classes, ESRC Research Centre, Essex University, £19.95 plus p&p

Child refugees held in jails

Natasha Walter

CHILD refugees are being held in prisons and detention centres in Britain in defiance of international guidelines on the treatment of unaccompanied young asylum-seekers and despite government promises that this would happen "only as a last resort".

Journalists have talked to seven children who have been held in detention in Britain. One 13-year-old Nigerian girl, who was held in Campsfield Detention Centre, near Oxford, for three months, spoke of bullying by immigration officers, freezing conditions and poor health care. When she was feeling ill, she was handed sleeping pills.

A 16-year-old Nigerian boy, who was held in Rochester prison, Kent, for six months, spoke of being locked in his cell for 15 hours a day and being beaten up by other inmates. Another 16-year-old boy claims to have been threatened and punished by the prison staff.

Most of the children travelled alone because their parents had been killed in the countries they fled. None of them had been granted asylum in Britain. When they reach 18 they may be deported.

The detention of children in Britain has been condemned by Amnesty International as a violation of the fundamental rights of the child. Britain has signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which requires that refugee children be given appropriate protection, humanitarian assistance and the highest standards of health care.

Forty-eight unaccompanied asylum-seekers who say they are aged under 18 have been held in detention this year. Nine are still being held.

The Immigration Minister, Michael O'Brien, said in a statement that the Government would not "normally detain anyone under 18" and that "children would be detained by UK immigration authorities only as a last resort".

Simon Russell, refugee officer at Amnesty, believes that the detention of minors is a growing problem. "The attitude of the immigration officials is hardening," he said. "They are punishing children for making false statements.

"Treating children like this is totally unacceptable according to internationally recognised standards of human rights. A country that calls itself civilised should never treat children this way."

Lyndall Sachs, the public information officer for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said: "We never support detention of refugees because these people have not committed a crime. Child refugees are very, very vulnerable."

The children often enter Britain with false papers that say they are over 18. That means the original decision to detain them is not always wrong, according to UK immigration law, but lawyers and refugee advocates are concerned that the Home Office can be intransigent once the children give their true age. Even when birth certificates, medical assessments or testimony from family members are produced to support their claim, children are still held.
— The Observer

Judges to explain sentencing

Alan Travis

A RADICAL reform of the way judges and magistrates sentence criminals is to be announced by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, to combat the deep cynicism among the public towards the courts.

The change will lead to the introduction of American-style sentencing under which the judge announces what the convicted person will serve — for example, from four to six years — and the victim will be told in writing the earliest possible release date.

The changes are to be announced in a practice direction from the Lord Chief Justice at the same time as the Crime and Disorder Bill makes its way through Parliament. The Court of Appeal is also to be asked to publish new guidelines on "the going rate" for particular crimes.

Ministers believe the current system of sentencing, under which judges announce only the maximum time, confuses the public since it is never clear how long the convicted person will serve. Ministers are concerned that too often the victim is surprised and upset to find that the criminal can get out of jail years before they had expected.

New research shows that one major source of the public demand for tougher sentences stems from ignorance about how often courts impose jail sentences. Half those interviewed thought only 50 per cent of convicted rapists go to jail — while, in fact, 91 per cent are imprisoned.

Mr Straw is to ask the Court of Appeal to take responsibility for "generating a better public appreciation of sentencing decisions".

Critics have argued that it is difficult to regard prison sentences as a deterrent when it is impossible to find out what sentence a criminal can expect to get.

Ministers also believe that the public deserves to know what sentences actually mean. At present, few inmates ever serve the maximum sentences announced by the court.

Rise in cases of diabetes

Chris Mihill

CASES of diabetes in Britain are set to increase by more than 1.5 million over the next 13 years, reflecting a global trend that will see the illness nearly double by 2010, a new report says.

Globally, there were an estimated 123 million people with the condition in 1995 but by 2010 the number will have grown to 220 million, says the British Diabetic Association.

A rapid change in lifestyles and population demography was fuelling the rise, with growing obesity, Western-style diets, less physical exercise and a rising elderly population all contributing.

There is likely to be a drop in the number of cases of people needing insulin to treat the disease — mainly young people — but a huge rise in non-insulin diabetes, which predominately occurs in late middle age.

The report, published in the journal Diabetic Medicine, says that in the UK the number of diabetics needing insulin in 1995 was about 200,000, but this will drop to 180,000 by 2010. Non-insulin diabetes is expected to rise with the ageing population.

Anti-meat ad banned

Rory Carroll

THE Advertising Standards Authority has upheld complaints from the meat industry that the Vegetarian Society wrongly claimed eating meat caused cancer.

The advertisements in four national newspapers, which showed photographs of surgery scars for cancer, were also deemed to be "shocking and unduly distressing".

The advertising industry watchdog accused the society of exaggerating the link between meat and cancer, and suggesting that a casual link was universally accepted.

Objections from the Meat and Livestock Commission, the National Farmers' Union and the Danish Bacon and Meat Council that the advertisements were misleading were accepted on the grounds that government guidelines warned only of increased risk from consuming significant amounts of red meat.

Steve Connor, spokesman for the Vegetarian Society, said: "[The ASA is] crippling our freedom of speech. We are not being allowed to get our message across thanks to the ASA giving increasingly bizarre findings. Nothing in the advertisement was factually incorrect. We never said meat causes cancer, we talked about it increasing risk."

Pledge needed to protect poor

WILL the real Tony Blair stand up? Before he sinks further into a second welfare bog — with the even more controversial idea of substantial cuts to disability and sick pay — it is crucial he sets out some firm principles for his welfare reform. Is he, as he wrote in the Sun newspaper last week, only squeezing benefits because of Labour's promise not to "let public spending out of control . . . If money was no problem, we would not have had to do it"? Or is he, as he insisted in a television interview last Sunday, intent on reducing the social security budget so there is more money for health and education? It ill becomes the Prime Minister to declare, "No one is talking about taking away benefits from those who need them, because we mustn't do that." That is precisely what his Government is doing to one-parent families with cuts to two separate benefits.

The same confused — and contradictory — goals that surrounded the one-parent family row have resurfaced following the leak last week of a Department of Social Security document on disability. It suggested that "substantial savings" from disability benefits were needed to pay for extra spending on health and education. What is most worrying about the new leak is the sense of a government searching desperately for some fig leaves to cover a new round of cuts.

The two key architects of Labour's welfare-to-work strategy have an opportunity this week to clear up the confusion. Gordon Brown was due to go before the Commons Treasury select committee on Wednesday, and Tony Blair to speak to the Parliamentary Labour party on the same day. Here are some obvious principles they should set out. A clear and unequivocal pledge that poor people will not be left poorer following the restructuring of the welfare state. A recognition that even the most successful welfare-to-work programme will still leave large numbers unable to find work. They must be protected. Where more funds are needed to provide support services — such as childcare facilities to allow claimants to work — the money will come from economic growth or the better-off, not from reducing the benefits of the poor. Ministers will not exaggerate the savings from welfare-to-work. All these fundamental principles were breached by the one-parent benefit cuts. They are in danger of being breached with the squeeze on disability benefits. The Government is right to seek to reduce Britain's dependency culture. All lone parents and disabled people who want to work should be given help. But as Australia has demonstrated, providing adequate childcare facilities is not cheap. The recipe for helping disabled people back to work has been set out by disability groups for years. It ranges from better access to buildings, buses and trains to tougher regulations to prevent discrimination by employers. None of this is cheap.

The Social Security Secretary, Harriet Harman, is clearly too pusillanimous in protecting the poor. It is time that more robust ministers insist on an early Cabinet debate. It is not just the poor who need help: the reputation of their party is at stake.

Asia's avoidable meltdown

BARELY three months ago South Korea looked to most observers — including highly paid Western analysts, bankers and the International Monetary Fund — to be a prosperous country. Now it appears as if the whole economy is collapsing into bankruptcy as it joins other Asian Tigers in a financial meltdown. Western experts who were lauding the East Asian miracle earlier in the year are now equally busy predicting its death knell. The Wall Street Journal sees the whole sorry episode as an obituary for the long-termist "communitarian capitalism" of Asia, which put employees and customers ahead of shareholders, and a total justification of the short-termism practised in Britain and the United States, which has been criticised in the past for chalking up short-term profits for business at the expense of long-term investment.

There is some truth in this but there is growing support, particularly in the US, for the opposite view — that the Asian crisis, far from being systemic, was an avoidable one caused not by globalisation but by its mismanagement. No economy can go on expanding at almost 10 per cent for ever, and in nearly every Asian country the banks were overextended. But none of this caused the Pacific basis to implode. The mistakes started in Japan. Professor Martin Feldstein of Harvard plausibly blames Japan's ministry of finance for the collapse of the whole region. If instead of *raising* taxes the Ministry had *reduced* them in order to stimulate Japan's flagging economy, then Southeast Asia wouldn't, he argues, have been plunged into a series of competitive devaluations.

Another Harvard professor, Jeffrey Sachs, reminds us that three months ago the IMF welcomed South Korea's "impressive macroeconomic performance and . . . enviable fiscal record". Thailand was praised in similar terms. Sachs argues that Asia's "fundamentals" are adequate since budgets are in balance or in surplus, inflation low, private savings rates high and the economies poised for export growth. Japan has a huge and growing trade surplus. Asia is reeling, Sachs says, from a "self-fulfilling withdrawal of short-term loans".

Such analysis underplays both the extent of the reckless profligacy of the giant Korean corporations and the parlous state of the balance sheets of a number of Japanese banks. But that doesn't detract from the view that this was a manageable problem blown into a deeply worrying crisis worsening by the day. Exit strategy hasn't been helped by the fact that the IMF's rescue plans have collided with the political realities of the Korean election campaign, preventing necessary bank closures and generating false promises. The danger now is that the IMF's medicine — a severe monetary and fiscal squeeze — may kill the patient altogether.

It is very hard to reverse a crisis of confidence once it has started, but that doesn't mean nothing can be done. Japan should cut taxes immediately to stimulate the yen. This will give a much needed boost to Japan's economy and help to reverse Southeast Asia's downward spiral. Meanwhile the IMF should insist on drastic reconstruction of Korea's banking sector and the archaic *chaebol* system. It must not apply further bloodletting to a patient already suffering from haemophilia. In the longer term the world's leading countries must address the problem of how globalisation is to be managed (and that includes drastic reform of the role of the IMF). Leaving everything solely to the markets clearly isn't working.

Turkey gets the cold shoulder

TURKEY'S exclusion from the remotest consideration for membership of the European Union is a worrying development. The EU summit at Luxembourg had no alternative, by the time it met, than to bar Ankara from even the B-list of potential entrants. But no one can be really happy with the outcome — except, shortsightedly, Greece. It is in no one's interests if this decision merely strengthens the military in Ankara as it plays off the secularists against the Islamists.

The EU was right to insist that Turkey must improve its human rights record before being considered for membership. As the current EU president put it, a country in which torture persists cannot sit at the same table. But the decision in effect to back the Greek line unreservedly on how to handle its territorial disputes with Turkey is more debatable. It is one thing to refuse to recognise the Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus; something else to pretend that Cyprus meets both the political and economic criteria for EU membership and to place it on the fast track. There is, as a matter of plain fact, a historical division still to resolve.

United States diplomats have argued, correctly, that a Turkey within Europe would be a more stable nation, but they have turned a blind eye to the "self-destructive" behaviour of the Turkish military. Historically, the value attached by Washington to Turkey as a key player on the cold war fault line encouraged Ankara to persist in policies that have alienated Europe. And when the cold war ended, Turkey proved useful to the West as an ally against Iraq. Today it continues to attack separatist Kurds in Iraq with US-supplied weapons: the Iraqi problem thus perpetuates the Turkish problem.

Strategic considerations lead to blurred messages that only nourish illusions in Ankara. A civil society is starting to emerge in Turkey alongside the more familiar forces of Islam and military-guarded secularism. It is a complex mix requiring more subtle handling, not more open rebuffs.

Europe still clings to Uncle Sam's coat-tails

Martin Woollacott

EUROPE has reached a point where the distinction between internal and external policies has almost disappeared, opening up frightening vistas of both opportunity and responsibility. They go well beyond the question of whether or not Britain and others not in the first wave will be allowed a voice in decisions over monetary union. The bigger question for Europe is this: can it make its mark on the world or not? That may be decided as much along the lines of confrontation in Bosnia, and in the capitals of eastern Europe and the Middle East, as it will be in the corridors of the European Central Bank.

The decisions already made on expansion of the European Union may turn out to be as critical as the monetary union moves. Policies to do with the Arab-Israeli conflict, Iraq, Iran, and Bosnia, make up the larger picture. This month's demand from three governments that European aviation firms should consolidate is also part of it, as is the broader process of cross-border mergers of many kinds.

It is often said that Europe will have a common foreign and security policy only after it has achieved political union, a thought that provides an excuse for its usual disarray. The assumption is that there are some more or less domestic areas where Europeans find it easier to agree. But everything that members of the EU do constitutes foreign and security policy, since the decisions they take create the Europe with which the rest of the world has to have its relations. What is this Europe, as an actor on the world stage? The answer is that this is a Europe which consistently fails to agree on common policies when it discusses them within its own ranks. Instead it allows the United States to come in and end the argument by weight of its will and resources. The condition of physical, psychological and political dependence on America is the real difficulty. It is not just that Europe is disunited and that US leadership then overrides that disunity. It is that the expectation of American leadership allows Europe to be disunited.

The US is so often Europe's solution to the problem of its differences. And so often this means that the European argument is never finished and that the position of different European countries never shifts. Nobody prevails in Europe, because the US prevails instead, and everybody finds that convenient. A look around at the main areas of policy is illustrative. Notoriously, in Bosnia, the US had to take the lead in negotiating the Dayton agreement and then in enforcing it. Even now, Britain and France insist that the US must stay on militarily after next summer, threatening to withdraw their own troops if there are no Americans on the ground. There are technical reasons for this, in that European military strength, both in terms of sophisticated equipment and availability of soldiers, is less than it seems and not what it should be. The main other immediate reason appears to be that Paris and London fear that a purely European force would not have the authority of one led by Americans. But, beyond that, there is little evidence that there is any clear European strategy for the future of the states of former Yugoslavia. Leave that to the Americans. In other words, Europe needs the US more politically than militarily in the Balkans.

In the Middle East, "European" policy is a mess. There is some coherence on the Israeli-Palestinian question, but none on Iraq, not a great deal on Iran, and much contention beneath the surface on Turkey. Commercial rivalry underlies some of these differences. Others date back to colonial times. But here, too, US policy performs the function, for Europeans, of allowing different states to take up a range of positions while knowing that the ultimate responsibility for the stability of the area lies with Washington. France can favour a softer policy toward Iraq, both France and Germany an opening to Iran, while Germany can use Greece to fend off Turkish efforts to achieve a closer relationship with the EU. Again, there is a concealed dependence on US policy, which is supposed to keep Turkey sweet, as a Nato member and a partner of the Washington. Thus Chancellor Helmut Kohl can avoid the vote-losing act of appearing to endorse ultimate Turkish membership of the EU, or so at least the Turks themselves believe.

THERE is more than a hint of the same dependence on the US even in the area of foreign policy that appears most exclusively European, namely expansion of the EU to include European states. Nato's narrow focus on taking in only the three most obvious front-runners, essentially an American decision, has been paralleled by a similar caution on the part of the EU which wants a first wave of five or fewer. Before Luxembourg, murky games were being played by those who wanted to delay the entry of even the most favoured by lumping them in with all other applicants. Europe and the US have tried to lay responsibility on each other by contriving that Nato or the EU take the lead in incorporating eastern countries. Here too, then, we find European policies adrift in part because there is an expectation that America will take the strain.

European states do not fear a common foreign and security policy so much as having to concede leadership to other European states. Better be led by the US, they seem usually to conclude, than to defer to other Europeans. Even France prefers to defer directly to the Americans rather than to give in to London or Bonn when they take a US line. And even France, the most consistent advocate of European policies, fails to offer any full solution to Europe's lack of certain kinds of military capacity. It finds it politically impossible to spend the large additional amounts needed to give it, or Europe, a really effective military arm.

The Atlantic system is under pressure, with suspicions and irritations growing on both sides. Europe may not for ever be able to go on proclaiming European policies in theory but depending on the US in practice. And America, unsure whether it truly wants a more equal partner in Europe, would nevertheless be better off if it had one.

Le Monde

Baltic states pin hopes on EU membership

Henri de Bresson in Riga

"THE Europeans were pressurised by the Russians," claims Yolanta Jacovskiene, adviser to that indomitable Lithuanian nationalist, Vytautas Landsbergis. She makes no secret of her anger at the European Commission's decision to include only one of the three Baltic states, Estonia, on its list of candidates for an enlarged European Union.

The Baltic states — the only countries of the former Soviet Union that are on that list — see membership as a form of recognition, a guarantee of their security and freedom, and a justification for the sacrifices they have made since the early nineties in their attempt to move closer to the European model.

They made that point to the French European affairs minister, Pierre Moscovici, when he visited their respective capitals last week in the run-up to the Luxembourg summit on European enlargement which opened on December 8. He assured them that Paris did not want to see any country excluded, and encouraged them to pursue their efforts to adjust. "What counts is not moving the most swiftly, but being the best prepared," he emphasised at the close of his tour in the Latvian capital, Riga.

The Baltic states' decision after independence to adopt Western democratic rules and open up their economies to market forces did not immediately, like some magic wand, close the economic and social gap with the West, as some had hoped.

There have been some nasty surprises. A gulf has opened up between a new élite of very young, Western-trained civil servants with high-rolling lifestyles and society at large, which, at a more profound level, finds it very hard to adjust to a pace of change that entails a high social cost.

When tourists flock to the brand-new centres of Riga and the Lithuanian and Estonian capitals, Vilnius and Tallinn, what strikes them is the abundance of Mercedes and other luxury cars. But retired people and other casualties of the communist regime live in poverty, while the middle classes can barely keep their heads above water. Yet there is no reference to such matters when you talk to their leaders, who prefer to stress their countries' return to macroeconomic equilibrium.

Although output fell and prices soared in the wake of independence, the Baltic states pride themselves on the fact that they have achieved enviable growth rates, kept inflation under control and, taking their cue from Brussels and the International Monetary Fund, implemented austerity budget policies that more than one European government could well take as a model.

The financial crises of 1994-95 made it possible to put the banking sector on a sounder footing, and foreign investors have been made to feel very welcome. Estonia showed the way by privatising very early on. Lithuania and Latvia followed suit.

The private sector generates 75 per cent of Lithuania's gross national product. The government has begun the process of privatising the 14 remaining large state enterprises. Because there is little alternative, this shock therapy is subject to little debate. In Latvia, with elections looming next year, none of the main parties questions the reforms.

The Estonian foreign minister, Henrik Ilnes, who used to work for Radio Free Europe, points to his country's determination to continue along the lines of total liberalisation. He likes to project the image of a "with-it" republic open to innovation and the outside world.

Estonia has greatly benefited from the proximity of Finland, which contributes greatly to its neighbour's tourist trade. But the existence of its very large Russian community — which makes up almost 30 per cent of the population — clouds relations with Moscow, which constantly likes to remind Estonia of its presence.

Russian pressure weighs even more heavily on the other two republics, where the fear is that they may become pawns in a power struggle between Moscow and Europe. Vilnius has had to agree to grant the Russians the right to pass through Lithuania to Kaliningrad, a territory with important military installations that would become an enclave in the EU if Lithuania joined the European club.

With its three ports, Latvia is a major hub of Russian trade, in particular its oil exports. It is the most russified of the three republics, and the worst hit by corruption and mafia activities. The Russian community accounts for more than half the population of Riga, where it controls the business world, especially trade with the Motherland.

The Russians have a complex relationship with the nationalist Latvian government, which has imposed draconian conditions on their integration. The government has been criticised by Brussels, which fears such behaviour may harm its prospects of attaining EU membership.

"Thank God we have the target of joining the EU," says Janis Jurkans, who was Latvia's first foreign minister after independence and now heads, with four deputies, one of the parties that oppose the nationalists. "It's the only medicine that will keep us on the road to a market economy and democracy. If we lose sight of that target, there'll be an economic and political disaster."

It is now up to the Europeans not to disappoint those hopes.

(December 10)

A clean break with the past

EDITORIAL

THE Kyoto climate change conference, which ended in the early hours of December 11, was the scene of interminable horse-trading. The talks showed, sadly, just how selfish some nations can be and how successfully arms can be twisted by pressure groups.

The terrible prospect that global warming represents for the billions of human beings who will have to face increasingly severe droughts, floods and cyclones was sometimes forgotten in the welter of technocratic and corporate jargon.

But it would be wrong to dismiss the great step forward made by the talks: the international community, now that its eyes have been opened to a glaringly obvious risk, ended up taking great strides towards prevention.

True, targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (cuts of between 6 and 8 per cent for the main polluter countries) still fall far short of what they should be. According to expert scientific opinion, we shall need to reduce them by more than half the present level to avert all risk.

But an initial step forward has been made. For the first time an apparently inexorable process has been reversed — a process set in motion by a blinkered and suicidal urge to go on producing more and more.

The message of Kyoto is that our societies should stop basing their growth on the principle of an interminable scramble to consume more energy, and that since they will have to make do with less they should strive to be more effective.



'The situation is serious, but we will do as little as possible'

That will require them to economise, optimise, rationalise and modernise instead of squandering and exhausting resources. It means they will have to opt for the durable instead of acting as if air, water and the soil, which are vital for the survival of the human race, did not have their own equilibrium — an equilibrium that needs to be carefully husbanded by mankind.

There is another lesson to be learnt from Kyoto: the spectacular emergence of ecology on the economic scene. Since the climate is being changed by man, we must "manage" it. Now that human activity is the main factor in transforming nature, inevitably there will be repercussions in terms of economic instruments and mechanisms.

This is already true of pollution, waste, the ozone layer, water, forests, and maritime and land resources. The environment is no longer purely a question of protection or ideology. It has taken on a market "value", and that value carries a price tag with it.

In this respect, certain options discussed at Kyoto, but not yet adopted, appear highly debatable. The introduction of a "pollution market" that would enable trading-in-pollution rights has been touted as a guarantee of efficiency. And so much the better if that is true.

But there would be an intolerable perversion of the system if that market were to become a channel through which the rich, because they were rich, could simply buy from the poor the right to go on behaving wastefully. It would be rather as if certain car owners were allowed to buy the right to drive at 200kph while all other drivers were forced to observe speed restrictions in the general interest.

(December 12)

Aids conference told about growing travel restrictions

Jean-Yves Nau in Abidjan

AIDS remains an infectious disease that prompts irrational political and diplomatic responses. Contrary to what one might assume from the rapid dissemination of the latest Western breakthroughs in the treatment of HIV-positive people, many countries have in recent years adopted legislation that results in de facto restrictions on the free movement of infected persons.

Those restrictions take the form of either preventing such persons from entering a country or deporting them. That is the conclusion of a study carried out at the request of the European Union by Jean-Yves Carlier, a law professor at Louvain Catholic University. The findings were made public at the 10th Conference on Aids in Africa currently being held in Abidjan, the capital of Ivory Coast.

Of the 89 countries studied, in addition to EU members, 49 are able to draw on their legislative arsenal to implement such restrictions. "International law, like European law, does not contain any absolute obligation 'to prohibit prohibition'," Carlier explains.

"As a result, measures that restrict the free movement of HIV-positive people are not in absolute contradiction with international or European law. However, those measures may be contrary, under international law, to the 'principle' of non-discrimination and other fundamental rights (such as the protection of a person's private life or the prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment), and, under European law, to the principle of the free movement of persons."

In EU countries, restrictions on the free movement of HIV-positive people are essentially aimed at nationals from the developing countries and focus mainly on long stays. They may result from legislation requiring applicants to supply a medical certificate in order to obtain a residence permit, or even from specific provisions that rule out any possibility of residence for HIV-positive people or Aids sufferers. They may also, on the contrary, have no legal foundation.

There are no restrictions on the free movement of EU nationals within the EU. There are, on the other hand, marked differences and a lack of any harmonisation of policies when it comes to the treatment of infected people from the developing countries. Some countries, such as Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands and Portugal, do not require health checks. Others, including Spain, Greece, Italy, Ireland and Britain, impose health checks without mentioning HIV infection.

"Curiously, most countries impose restrictions only on long stays by HIV-positive people, but not on short stays such as tourist or business trips," Carlier told Le Monde. "Yet we know that the spread of HIV is due much more to tourists or business people on short trips.

"The countries concerned should be consistent and be courageous enough to admit they take such steps for economic reasons. They don't want their health budgets to suffer the burden of having to treat foreign nationals whom they can no longer deport on the grounds that they are infected, as is currently the case in the EU."

The French health minister, Bernard Kouchner, told Le Monde that in his opinion the EU should not allow former Soviet-bloc countries to join the community if they continue to restrict the free movement of HIV-positive people. "They should not be allowed to impose a 'serological baptism' at their borders. That would be intolerable, and would be an obstacle in the way of EU enlargement," he said.

(December 10)

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
December 21 1997

Europe's bewildered right

COMMENT
Daniel Vernet

MASSIMO CACCIARI'S view that "democracy is shaky", following his easy win in last month's mayoral elections in Venice is more a political scientist's judgment than a candidate's.

Cacciari expressed his deep regret at the virtual disappearance of the right from most of Italy's large city councils following the local elections, but it would be speculative to draw too many conclusions from them either in terms of Italy, or Europe as a whole. None the less, conservative and liberal parties across Europe are having a hard time picking up the pieces after recent gains by the left; so much so that rightwing governments in the European Union sometimes appear to have lost their bearings.

Take, for example, the recent extraordinary EU summit in Luxembourg, where the German chancellor, Helmut Kohl, and the Spanish prime minister, José Maria Aznar, were perceived to be fighting rearguard actions against a European employment policy. Even leaders with social democratic tendencies were seen to be closing ranks, an unheard-of development in Europe.

There are several reasons for this. In Italy, a country that has seen more than its fair share of sensational political events, the Olive Tree coalition's victory in the local elections was followed by several critical weeks that might well have sealed the fate of the government of the prime minister, Romano Prodi. Instead, the centre-left coalition strengthened its position, causing turmoil in the ranks of its centre-right rivals.

It is an understatement to say that the defeat touched off in-fighting at the highest level of the centre-right. The Pole of Liberties' two leaders, Silvio Berlusconi and Gianfranco Fini, have emerged diminished from the wrangle; the former because he is interested in politics only in so far as it is useful to his business interests, the latter because he has not succeeded in turning the National Alliance (the new embodiment of the old neo-fascist Italian Social Movement, MSI) into the country's largest opposition party. The advent of bipartisan politics in Italy has, accordingly, been delayed.

"Everybody notes the ambiguity of a group that includes the old MSI, people longing for the return of Christian Democracy, a business party [Berlusconi], radicals and others," says Walter Veltroni, the second-ranking official of the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS — formerly the communists). The right, he adds, should think about "its own identity".

Britain's Conservatives are also suffering an identity crisis following their heavy defeat by the Labour party in the general election in May. The replacement of John Major by William Hague as party leader has not helped to restore the robustness that the party lost during its last two years in power. Hague cuts a pretty sorry figure compared with Tony Blair.

Hague's public outbursts against the euro have not only drawn the wrath of some prominent Conservatives, but also brought warnings from the Confederation of British Industry, which feels it has more in common with New Labour. The Conservative party meanwhile is threatened by the same divisions that kept Blair's party out of power for 18 years.

The French right may differ from its British and Italian counterparts in that its natural leader also happens to be the country's president. But here, too, the right is in disarray. Opinions are divided even among President Jacques Chirac's own followers as to whether his position is advantageous to the right. As in Italy, France's ruling "broad left" coalition is skilfully thwarting the opposition's attempts to expose flaws that could be exploited for political advantage.

Closer examination shows that the British, French and Italian situations share a common feature. In all three cases, the left has deprived the right of much of its reason for existence by adopting policies formerly seen as the prerogative of conservatives and liberals.

What centre-right government — over 40 years, the Italian Christian Democrats' almost unbroken rule always threw up centre-right coalitions — would have had the courage to straighten out public finances, embark on reforming a pension system that was ruining the country, and set limits on wages? Prodi and the PDS are undertaking this very course in Europe's name, an action that Berlusconi considered too restrictive. In a mischievous gesture, which nevertheless says much about the change in mental attitudes that has taken place, the Italians even proposed that a German be appointed to head the future European Central Bank.

TRUE, management in Italy fumes about rising taxes, rails at the time it is taking to roll back the boundaries of the welfare state, and worries about concessions made to communists and labour unions on the length of the working week. Indeed, only a year ago the Pole of Liberties succeeded in bringing thousands of middle-class Italians on to the streets to protest against government policy. But that reaction was an isolated spasm, like the secessionist pantomime that Umberto Bossi's Northern League is putting on.

Britain's New Labour has, of course, cashed in on the Tories' loss of power. Nevertheless it is the party's capacity for breaking with Labour dogma that enabled it to pull off a resounding victory. It has no problems occupying the same ideological ground in terms of economics that was marked out by Thatcherism, even though it is determined to correct the most damaging effects of such policies.

Lionel Jospin's government gives the impression of having a more ideological approach than its Italian and British counterparts. Yet, as in Italy, the French government has succeeded in adapting to Maastricht's strictly monetarist criteria, an achievement that the previous government of Alain Juppé never managed.

The French government is opening up state enterprises to private investors without causing an uproar, whereas the right's attempts at privatisation attracted only criticism. It is proposing a moderate reduction of the working week — to 35 hours — by limiting the economic impact of trumpeted social announcements. It has decided on "realistic" immigration and nationality policies that have caused some gnashing of teeth on the left, but are mostly spreading confusion in the ranks of the right.

European rightwing parties are all the more bewildered because they are torn between their Christian-social, even statist (as in France), traditions and their liberal credo. What is more, when they hold power, they have a hard time putting their doctrines into practice, Britain being a notable exception to this rule.

While the European left is ready to take up the challenge of adapting to the new conditions of global competition, the conservatives will have to get ready for a long sojourn in the political wilderness.

(December 3)

Farmers do well despite complaints

François Grosrichard

FRENCH farmers' leaders have for some time now conducted their demonstrations in a more relaxed fashion, moving away from the practice of hurling abuse like peasants in revolt, and renouncing the violence that led to piglets being strung up from the railings of sub-prefectures and ministers being sprayed with pig slurry.

These days they stage well-planned media events. Even the difficult episode of the "mad cow" crisis did not result in any excesses. Yet, mirroring their response to the European Union's first reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy in 1992, farmers are objecting furiously to a package of measures that have been proposed by the European Commission president, Jacques Santer.

In a way, it is understandable that French farmers are touchy about anything concocted in Brussels that might alter a system that has been operating smoothly since the 1960s. France is Europe's biggest agricultural power and also the principal beneficiary of the subsidies distributed by the Commission's agricultural orientation and guarantee fund.

According to the Commission report for 1995, of the 34,000 million ecus paid out in farm subsidies that year, France received 8,370 million, Germany 5,300 million and Spain 4,500 million.



Brainwave

ILLUSTRATION: CALLIGARO

When we know that the agriculture budget alone accounts for half of the EU's expenditure (instead of the 5 or 6 per cent, for example, paid out for research and development, and technology), it is easy to understand how high the stakes are, and the determination of farm lobbies to defend their incomes.

Experience has shown that the fears vigorously expressed five years ago were exaggerated. Not only did the predicted disaster fail to materialise, but farming income on the whole has improved substantially (an annual average increase of 2.4 per cent since 1990). The increase this year is expected to be comfortable.

"In a buoyant international context, production has been brought under control, stocks have been drawn down and budget orientations carefully followed; the situation seems to be fairly favourable," says Isabelle Albouy-Delponte in her study, L'Agriculture de la France.

Labour union initiatives probably have something to do with this encouraging trend. But since the end of the 1980s European authorities and governments have been making financial efforts as much out of a concern for solidarity as in the interests of competitiveness — lightening the tax burden, developing fuel from vegetable sources, deferring social contributions, providing national and EU subsidies.

Very likely there remain weakened and even marginalised pockets in the farming community — such as retired farmers and their spouses, some family operations in the Midi specialising in growing fruit and vegetables that face competition from Spain and Morocco, and especially some cattle farmers in the Massif Central.

But pig and chicken farmers in western France, wheat producers, and Côtes du Rhône and Libourne winegrowers are today in the big league. Pretending that it is the opposite and whining without making any distinctions between farming categories smacks of demagoguery, not to say disinformation. We know now, for example, that 1997 will have been an exceptionally good year for sugar beet and maize.

After a few tactical errors, the government has given the larger farmers' unions pledges of a policy likely to keep their followers happy. Neither the right nor the left has any intention of neglecting this electorate. As the Marquis de Mirabeau observed in 1758 in his plea for agriculture: "All policies start from a grain of wheat."

European subsidies for calves have been recalculated to meet the wishes of Paris; the French government has authorised the growing of genetically altered maize (which the largest farmers' union has greeted with satisfaction) and this week it intends to announce a project to help organic farming.

In view of all this, is the package of measures proposed by the Commission president quite so bad? Grain farmers, in favour of lower prices so as to be able to export more, find the proposals fairly agreeable, winegrowers are not threatened by any revolution, and milk producers are comforted by the thought that an agreement they recently signed with the milk-processing industry will protect them.

Only farmers producing quality beef, who arguably need a substantial improvement of the subsidies paid for raising free-range cattle, and growers of rape, peas and sunflowers have any real grounds for demanding a substantial review of the Commission project.

French agriculture does not lack money, markets or managers, but farmers. Despite recent efforts, for every four or five farmers who retire, only one takes their place. In the Paris basin the cost of land is so high that it is impossible for a young man to acquire a viable farm.

The concentration is increasing, with 17 per cent of the farms accounting for half the total income from farming. It is as if farmers are thinking only of their immediate future, forgetting their grandchildren.

(December 4)

Le Monde

Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
December 21 1997

The Washington Post

Iranian Leader Urges Dialogue with U.S.

John Lancaster in Cairo

IRAN President Mohammed Khatemi called last weekend for "thoughtful dialogue" with the American people in the most conciliatory remarks by an Iranian leader toward the United States since Islamic revolutionaries toppled the U.S.-backed monarchy in 1979.

"I declare my respects to the great people of the United States and I hope that in the close future I would have a dialogue and talk with the people of America and I hope this will not take long," Khatemi said at a news conference in the Iranian capital Tehran.

In Washington, a senior Clinton administration official involved in U.S. policy toward Iran said, "We're ready to sit down with them face to face, government to government, if it's authoritative . . . If that's what he's talking about, it's a potentially positive statement."

The official said Khatemi's statements may be a response to President Clinton's declaration last May that he was open to dialogue with Tehran after Khatemi, a moderate, was elected.

That call was reiterated last week by State Department deputy spokesman James Foley, who renewed the U.S. offer of "dialogue" and specified that it should "take place with an authorized representative of the government and that it be acknowledged publicly." A readiness for an "authoritative dialogue" with Iran has been the stated administration policy since 1994.

In some respects, Khatemi's remarks echoed previous Iranian statements to the effect that the Islamic republic has no quarrel with the American people, only with their government. He offered no specific formula for improving relations between Tehran and Washington, which severed diplomatic ties in 1980 over the taking of American hostages. He criticized American politicians as "behind the times" and reiterated Iranian opposition to the U.S.-sponsored Middle East peace process.

Nevertheless, Khatemi's conciliatory language marked a clear shift from the usual tenor of official Iranian rhetoric toward "the Great Satan." In that regard, it is consistent with his efforts to improve Iran's relations with the outside world — efforts that got a major boost last week when Khatemi hosted a summit in Tehran of leaders from Muslim countries, including such staunch U.S. allies as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

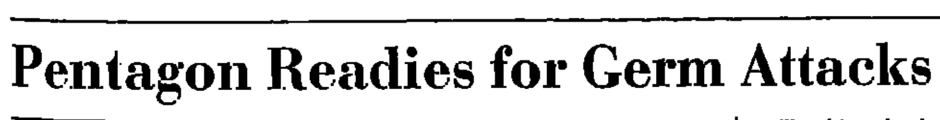
"He's at the limit of the ballpark," a Western diplomat said by telephone last week from the Iranian capital. "I don't think it's a dramatic new emphasis, but it is a re-emphasis of the most positive formulation of their line. It's accentuating the positive rather than a new opening . . . It shows they're still on a charm offensive."

Partly on the strength of his plea for greater openness to other cultures, Khatemi, 55, won an upset victory last May over the candidate favored by religious hard-liners who dominate the Iranian political establishment. In response to a question during his news conference, the moderate Shiite Muslim cleric went out of his way to praise Americans and to emphasize his desire for better relations between the countries.

Khatemi offered little insight as to whether Iran's eagerness for dialogue with the United States extends to U.S. political leaders. But he seemed to leave the door open to that possibility, observing that "the U.S. government is, after all, the U.S. government. It has been elected by the American people, and we respect that." Any improvement in relations between the two governments is sure to come slowly. The United States accuses Iran of trying to wreck the Middle East peace process, pursuing weapons of mass destruction and sponsoring terrorism. Iran deeply resents the U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf and has demanded the return of billions of dollars in Iranian assets frozen in U.S. banks during the revolution.

In his comments, Khatemi did not shy from criticism of U.S. political leaders, saying they had failed to come to grips with the realities of the post-Cold War world. "Something that pains me, and for which I pity the American people, is that their leaders have fallen behind the times," he said. "In a rapidly changing world . . . the United States still imagines that it is the sole power, and that it must impose its will on the whole world at any cost."

An Iranian soldier in Qom walks out of a shop selling portraits of religious and political leaders alongside images of the national football team PHOTOGRAPH: ENRIC MARTI



Pentagon Readies for Germ Attacks

Bradley Graham
In Dugway proving ground, Utah

A PIONEERING Marine Corps unit, trained to respond to germ and poison gas attacks, recently started showing up beside traditional law enforcement organizations at some major national events, a sign of the government's growing concern about the threat from biological and chemical weapons.

The team made its quiet debut at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. Bunked in a wine warehouse, the elite group suited up when an explosion shook Centennial Park, bracing for mass casualties before the blast was traced to a conventional bomb.

Since then, the Marine unit, as well as a special Army detachment similarly equipped with bio-chem protective gear and detection devices, has monitored President Clinton's second inauguration from the Marine Barracks in Washington and hovered near a July summit of world leaders in Denver.

Despite these and other precautions, however, U.S. officials acknowledge that efforts to protect the country against germ weapons are in their infancy and that current military resources are woefully inadequate to cope with attacks involving lethal substances capable of killing tens of thousands of people.

"We are not currently equipped to handle a widespread terrorist attack that would involve biological weapons," said Deputy Secretary of Defense John J. Hamre. "We're beginning to bring together the pieces, but we're not there yet."

Defense experts raise particular alarm in the case of biological weapons. They say that while U.S. military forces have made advances in defending against chemical attack, American troops remain inadequately equipped, poorly trained and insufficiently immunized to confront germ warfare. American cities are even more vulnerable to the sneak release of biological agents in subway systems or outside the unguarded vents of office buildings.

A report due to be released next month by the Defense Science Board, an independent advisory panel to Pentagon leaders, faults existing military capabilities to detect and respond to biological attack and says efforts to improve defenses have "stretched thin" current personnel and capabilities. The report urges a tenfold increase in intelligence funding to track the germ warfare threat, expansion of medical and other military response teams, greater cooperation with civilian biotechnology experts, and a new program with Moscow to keep displaced Russian experts from selling their germ warfare know-how to foreign bidders.

Here at the military's only facility for field testing of biological and chemical defenses, 60 miles west of Salt Lake City, U.S. military forces last week experimented with new devices for analyzing airborne germ agents. Air detection is crucial to confirming an attack is under way and identifying the agent because the fastest way to infect large populations is through the lungs.

It was only in October last year that the Army fielded its first-ever biological detection unit, a heavy Humvee with a two-person crew operating a medical diagnostic lab. That detection system is too big and cumbersome for rapid deployment to a U.S. city under biological attack, so the military is researching smaller, lighter and more mobile units for domestic emergencies.

Both the Army and the Marine Corps have emergency response teams on 24-hour alert to assist law enforcement and public health officials around the country in the event of a domestic germ attack. But in combined exercises here over the past week, these units still were learning how to coordinate their sometimes overlapping responsibilities.

Numbering only several hundred in all, members of the Army's Technical Escort Unit and the Marine Corps' Chemical Biological Incident Response Force conceded they would be easily overwhelmed in a real attack involving massive casualties. Without advance warning, defense officials said, the military groups could take up to four hours just getting to an airport before flying to the crisis zone.

For all the worry about the potential of germ attack, defense officials and civilian specialists say making and delivering a biological weapon is not easy. Microscopic anthrax spores, for instance, require a high degree of technical sophistication to separate and collect and then disseminate using some kind of aerosol system.

A Pentagon report on weapons proliferation observed last month that "most terrorist organizations have shown little proclivity to develop and use" biological and chemical weapons.

But the March 1995 release of the nerve agent sarin in Tokyo's subway system by Aum Shinrikyo, a religious group, was alarming. The attack, which killed 12 people and injured about 5,500, demonstrated that terrorist groups now exist with resources comparable to some foreign governments.

Not Yet a Treaty on Warming

EDITORIAL

THE CLIMATE change agreement reached in Kyoto is both more and less than the Clinton administration suggests. The industrialized nations of the world, including the United States, agreed to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases to about 7 percent below 1990 levels by sometime between 2008 and 2012.

That may not sound like much, and it may not sound like soon. But greenhouse gases — carbon dioxide and five others — come from burning oil, gas and coal, and as such are intimately connected to almost every aspect of daily life: heating, air conditioning, driving, manufacturing.

And the United States, if it stays on its current path, will be 34 percent above 1990 levels by the year 2010. That means a 7 percent reduction actually represents a reduction of more than a third.

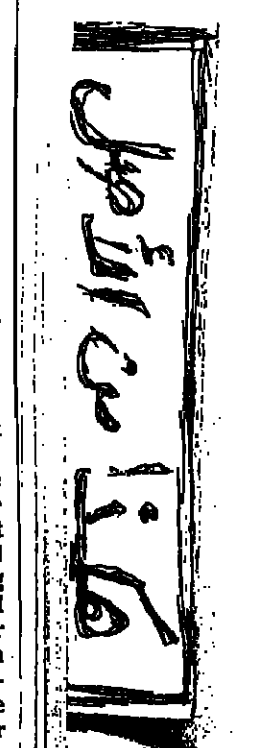
Nothing in the administration's record during the past five years has laid the groundwork for such a radical change, and President Clinton's proposed five-year, $5 billion program of tax incentives and research subsidies is small potatoes next to the dramatic transformation implied by the Kyoto promise.

That's why, all along, the administration acknowledged that some kind of binding targets would be needed — the certainty that energy use will become more expensive, or at least that the differential between wasteful and efficient energy use will grow. That's where the Kyoto pact as it now exists seems to us more modest than some of the claims being made for it, at least so far.

Vice President Al Gore referred to the agreement as "historic," saying "the nations of the world agreed" "to take strong, binding action against global warming." But only some of them did — the industrialized countries — and what they signed on to is only half a treaty, which is to say not yet a treaty at all.

This does not mean, as some Republican senators would have it, that the half-treaty is without value and should be rejected right away. It's no small thing that the world's industrialized nations — the world's major polluters — have promised in principle to reduce their greenhouse-gas emissions and to be held accountable for their promises.

The European Union's acceptance, after years of skepticism, of the idea of market mechanisms also represents significant progress. The administration has pledged to keep working on the treaty — to secure the involvement of developing countries, among other matters — and it should be given a chance to do so.



GUARDIAN WEEKLY
December 21 1997

U.S. Uses Carrot and Stick With Kabila

Lynne Duke and Thomas W. Lippman in Kinshasa

SECRETARY of State Madeleine K. Albright last week prodded President Laurent Kabila to respect human rights in Congo but also encouraged his fragile new government with moral support and promises of economic aid.

Albright's visit seemed designed to put the best possible face on relations between the United States and Congo, trying to influence the new government by working with it rather than alienating it.

She has emphasized several times during her weeklong Africa tour that Congo — the continent's third-largest nation and one of its most resource rich — is key to peace and stability in Central Africa. But Kabila has sent mixed signals about his intentions since seizing power in May after an eight-month military campaign toppled long-time dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

In particular, his government's attempts to display sovereignty and independence to the United Nations and foreign governments have been criticized as intransigence, and Kabila's domestic moves have been called repressive.

His government has banned political activity and jailed leading opponents. Rivalries in the military resulted in a day of street fighting recently. And he reneged for months, until last week, on an agreement to allow a U.N. probe of massacres allegedly committed by his forces during the anti-Mobutu campaign.

These early and troubling signals run counter to the democratization and reform that Albright has been promoting and which she continued to encourage last week. "There is a long way to go to reach these goals," she said of Congo, "but I am encouraged by a number of positive steps."

She said Kabila has made "a strong start" on the economic reform she said is needed to salvage this destitute nation of 45 million. She also cited as encouraging signs the naming of a constitutional commission that will draft new laws leading to an election, and the government's newfound cooperation to allow the U.N. investigation to go forward.

Albright announced that the Clinton administration will seek congressional approval for a $35 to $40 million aid package for health care, democratization programs and infrastructure development. The aid includes the rebuilding of the Black River bridge, blown up by Mobutu's army during the war, that is the main link between Kinshasa, the capital, and southeastern breadbasket regions.

The aid announcement follows Kabila's criticism of the $10 million the United States has pledged to a World Bank trust fund for emergency Congolese redevelopment. Kabila derided that amount as too little.

During her tour, Albright has said the United States wants a new relationship with Congo and its neighbors in which "I will talk less and listen more" — a phrase she has used repeatedly to signal Washington's willingness to tolerate some failures on the human-rights front from new African leaders who show long-term good intentions.

She put Kabila in that category. She said their private meeting was charactered by "shared interests, mutual respect and a joint willingness to solve problems."

Congo's problems run so deep and its institutions are so fragile after decades of misrule that the country cannot be expected to change overnight, she said. Washington and other governments which once supported Mobutu have a responsibility to help undo the mess that the now-deceased veteran dictator created, she said.

Much of their meeting centered on building civil society here, and she said she encouraged Kabila to allow open political dialogue. "I would hope that this would include an early end to restrictions on political party activity," she said.



Madeleine Albright and Laurent Kabila at the Presidential Palace in Kinshasa, during Albright's tour of Africa PHOTO: DAVID GUTTENFELDER

Those restrictions, however, show no sign of easing. And when a foreign journalist took Kabila to task for jailing his opponents, Kabila appeared annoyed. He accused a leading opposition figure, one of several dissenters in jail, of pushing for violent anti-government opposition. "If they incite people to violence, they will go to jail," Kabila said, adding, "Long live democracy!"

State Department spokesman James P. Rubin said that "the impression left by President Kabila's statements does not accord with the strong views expressed on the subject of legitimate political expression to him during their meeting . . . Secretary Albright intends to pursue the subject with the government of the Congo vigorously."

Tough international pressure also helped clear the way for the U.N. human rights probe. Investigators finally have traveled to a northern town to begin their work after Kabila gave the go-ahead.

Talking About Race – and Africa

COMMENT
Stephen S. Rosenfeld

SECRETARY of State Madeleine Albright's visit to strengthen American ties with Africa comes as Bill Clinton seeks to deepen his "conversation" on race with the American people. The timing is coincidental, says White House spokesman Mike McCurry, but the link intended between these diplomatic and domestic initiatives is calculated.

Here is how Clinton talks about this link:

(1) He says it is an American hallmark for citizens of different ethnicities to feel committed to their origins. At times this identification prompts foreign policy — as in the expansion of NATO into Central Europe. African Americans (and to a lesser extent, people from Caribbean countries and Hispanic points south) are in this pattern; issues such as South Africa, Nigeria and the African Great Lakes reach them. Part of the Clinton race initiative is to make people feel right about connecting to their roots.

(2) Clinton sees Americans' recognition of their diversity as a source of economic and geopolitical strength. As the emerging leaders of universities and corporations, African Americans can give the country a competitive advantage in, for instance, selling to the African market; we will put our best ambassadors forward. Thus do the moral claims of diversity and the claims of self-interest go hand in hand.

(3) Clinton does not imagine America exploding in Bosnian fashion, but he regularly cites Bosnia as a standing warning of the costs of letting ethnic or racial tensions run unchecked.

Well. An emphasis on making people feel good about their roots opens Clinton to a certain amount of mockery for confusing policy with "therapy".

The case for our self-interest in diversity remains arguable in some people's minds, but nonetheless expresses a worthy and necessary article of faith for a country like ours built on democracy and openness. The implied warning that something like what happened to Bosnia could also strike the United States appears to me to go a bridge or two too far.

It seems only natural that any serious national dialogue on race would strengthen American policy identification with Africa — and with Caribbean and Hispanic countries as well. These make their own demands on American attention and resources. They also house the historic roots and living kin of American minorities who could make up a majority of the population at the new century's midpoint.

Undeniably, efforts to work out the American interest in the mostly poor black and Hispanic places face uncertainties. These days, former State Department Africa policy chief Richard Moose notes, our national interest in Africa is barely sustained by a loose combination of humanitarians and African American professionals. The glory days in which whites joined these two groups in helping rout the South African apartheid regime are past. No other African-type issue has mobilized a like coalition.

Not that race no longer has an international relevance. Some of us may think we are striving in difficult circumstances to conduct an Africa policy based on resolving conflicts, building democracy and developing the continental economy. Others — like Randall Robinson, head of the TransAfrica lobby — suspect something closer to racism is at work. His examples include the avuncular perspective Reagan brought to white South Africa and the Bush-Clinton forcing back of fleeing Haitian refugees. He has an acute sense that the policy places remain "overwhelmingly white."

Rudolfo de la Garza of the University of Texas at Austin finds a racial factor rearing its head on, particularly, immigration. To provide a politically acceptable basis for fencing out fleeing Haitians, Clinton finally switched from stopping them on the high seas to invading the island to plant democracy and cut off the flow. To limit the influx of Mexicans, the largest and most pressing Hispanic migrant group, the United States runs an extended development as well as enforcement program.

Mora McClean, president of the African-American Institute, welcomes African Americans' identification with Africa, believing it to deepen their social and political activism at home. She sees South Africa's organized search for the truth about apartheid as a suggestive model for the United States. No matter what are the immediate ratings of Clinton's conversation on race, she says, it is timely and worth doing. Like many others, including me, she wants to see how it plays out.

Money Gives Its Views On Marriage

OPINION
Ellen Goodman

LET US begin with the Corporate Titan standing at the annual banquet, thanking his "Wife and Partner Without Whom" he would never have been elevated to the financial stratosphere. Now, fast-forward and check in on Mr. Ti year later. This time he's at the lawyer's office insisting that his wife was not the helium in his rise to the top, but the old ball and chain.

What a difference a year makes. What a difference a divorce makes. One year, a homemaker wife is the co-author of a success story. The next year, she is a corporate welfare recipient. It's not just that we rewrite the story of our own marriage when it goes kaput. We rewrite the idea of marriage itself.

This is the issue in the latest and most celebrated case of the rich and now famous Lorna and Gary Wendt. Their marriage began 30-odd years ago with high hopes and $2,500. It ended this month in a Connecticut courtroom with bitter recriminations and the division of over $100 million.

Gary Wendt became a top executive of General Electric, putting in 80- to 90-hour weeks at the office. Lorna earned her PHT — Putting Hubby Through — at Harvard Business School and then took care of kids and home.

When all was said and done, including the marriage, Gary thought Lorna should be "generously rewarded" with somewhere around $10 million, all she would ever "need." Lorna thought she was "entitled" to $50 million — half — and that "need" had nothing to do with it.

In the end, the judge awarded her an estimated $20 million. In corporate boardrooms they worried whether a spouse was entitled to future earnings. And the judge awarded her some. But in the public annals it became known as the "What is a Wife Worth" case.

It is intriguing how this case of the unbelievably rich focused both parties and the public on what she did or didn't do to deserve the marital millions. Nobody questioned what he did to deserve corporate millions.

Marriage these days is described in polite company and therapy as a 50-50 proposition. But when push comes to shove comes to split, it may be rescripted as an 80-20 proposition. The equal relationship based on love suddenly is recast as an economic relationship based on pay slips. We can literally see two value systems collide. Those of marriage and the market. Love and money.

After all, we go to work as individuals but live as couples. We get one name on the paycheck, but we think of marriage as exempt from the marketplace. We only acknowledge conflicts between our two points of view in notoriously skimpy prenuptial agreements — or in divorce court.

There is no way to assess what a wife — or husband, by the way — is worth in sweat equity. We marry for richer or poorer, and may work harder for poorer. But if there's no floor on our partnership, why should there be a ceiling?

I suppose I am an incurable romantic, worrying about the effects of divorce agreements on marriage. But the Wendts have taught us about the legal limits of romance.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
December 21 1997

Mexico City Mayor Faces Daunting Job

Molly Moore and John Ward Anderson in Mexico City

AS A YOUNGSTER, Cuauhtemoc Cardenas lived in one of the world's great capitals, a temperate oasis of lovely parks and colonial plazas nestled in a high valley surrounded by snow-capped mountains and volcanoes.

Six decades later, as he prepared for his inauguration as Mexico City's first modern-day elected mayor this month, the capital is considered one of the most corrupt, overcrowded, polluted and crime-infested megalopolises in the world, with mounting debt, horrendous traffic and poisonous air.

It is here, where police have taken to robbing citizens as well as protecting them, where jogging can be as hazardous to your health as smoking, and where corruption is so rampant that every city service — from obtaining a driver's license to mail delivery — requires payment of what has become an institutionalized system of bribes, that Cardenas was sworn in.

His new job is the most powerful elective office ever won by an opposition candidate in the nearly 70-year rule of Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). As a result, for Cardenas, 63, and his leftist Democratic Revolutionary Party, the next three years running what many analysts say is a virtually ungovernable city is being viewed as a crucial experiment in Mexico's democratic evolution.

How Cardenas copes with the city's numerous problems, and whether the PRI sabotages his administration, will help determine whether he or another opposition candidate has a chance of winning the presidency in 2000 and ending the PRI's seven-decade hold on Mexico's highest office.

"He's gambling his political future," said Homero Aridjis, a prominent Mexican writer and a long-time Cardenas associate from their home state of Michoacan in southwest Mexico, where Cardenas was governor from 1980-86. "Everybody expects him to perform miracles, to be a superman . . . But this city can cut off his political head."

A twice-defeated presidential candidate and son of one of the country's most beloved presidents from the 1930s, Cardenas broke from the PRI 10 years ago. Railing against the ruling party's legacy of corruption and failed economic policies, he was elected mayor in a landslide in July and helped give the ruling party its worst election thrashing ever.

The PRI not only lost the race for mayor, a post previously appointed by the president, it also lost its majority in the lower house of Congress, the House of Delegates, for the first time in seven decades.

Cardenas is considered a sort of giant-killer by citizens and political analysts alike, who view him as the top opposition candidate in the 2000 presidential race. But first, he must grapple with this city.

Because of Mexico's centralism, the city remains the political, economic, and artistic soul of the republic. It is responsible for 26 percent of the country's gross national product and houses a quarter of its citizens. An estimated 7.4 million tourists disregard its dangers every year to enjoy its cosmopolitan tree-lined boulevards, famous murals, historic monuments, ritzy shops, world-class museums and restaurants, and spring-like climate.

Founded as the Aztec kingdom of Tenochtitlan in about 1325, Mexico City became the capital of New Spain after Hernan Cortes defeated the great Aztec warrior Cuauhtemoc — after whom Cardenas was named — in 1521. The city evolved into a seat of government, a center of religion, culture and higher learning, a metropolis of parklands, churches and cobblestone streets.

Gradually, the city became a victim of its own success. Millions of rural Mexicans began flocking to the capital, overwhelming its aging infrastructure. Today, with an estimated 22 million people, 8.5 million live within the city proper that Cardenas will govern, Mexico City is by many accounts the biggest, most densely populated city in the world. Fresh water is scarce. There are about 2,500 demonstrations, protest marches or sit-ins every year. The city generates 12,000 tons of garbage a day, helping sustain more than seven rats per inhabitant.

"The city has lost its harmony, everybody fights only for himself," said Vicente Fox, the governor of the nearby state of Guanajuato and a declared presidential candidate for his right-of-center National Action Party in 2000.

Supporters cheer the inauguration of Cuauhtemoc Cardenas in Mexico City PHOTO: GERARDO MAGALLON

The Valley of Mexico perches at 7,350 feet above sea level, directly over an unstable fault line, surrounded by volcanoes and mountains that for centuries blocked adequate drainage and made the Valley of Mexico a huge swamp. The land is primarily reclaimed marsh, a mushy soil that magnifies the vibrations and destruction when earthquakes strike. More than 8,000 people died here in a massive 1985 tremor that measured 8.1 on the Richter scale.

The surrounding peaks and temperature inversions prevent industrial smog and vehicle emissions from escaping, transforming the valley into a giant bowl of yellow-gray gunk. More than 3.6 million vehicles clog the roads and, combined with 32,000 industrial plants, spew more than 12,000 tons of pollutants into the air every day. Air quality is unsatisfactory by international standards 324 days of the year.

Because of the earthquakes, rather than building up, the city spread, contributing to the sprawl and impoverished barrios that circle the city — the so-called Rings of Misery.

Leticia Sanchez, 38, a single mother who supports her four children by hand-washing clothes, resides within those rings. "Several young kids have died here in the barrio because of diseases," she said, "while on the other side of the toll road they are building a city [a glitzy shopping mall] for the rich."

Crime, poverty and corruption have created a dangerous, volatile brew. About 250,000 crimes are reported annually, including three homicides per day and 13 car thefts per hour. Many crimes are committed by police officers, who make as little as $95 per week. Last month, 26 police and military officers were arrested in connection with the torture and killings of six young men.

"You see a cop and instead of feeling protected you feel threatened," said Rogelio Mendez, 26, a financial analyst who has spent his life here. "How can you clean up a police force of so many that have been corrupt for so long?"

Unemployment officially is about 7 percent, but under-employment is chronic. About 70 percent of the city's work force earns less than $91 a week. Their economic situation has been exacerbated by four currency devaluations since 1976 that have eroded savings. Many experts trace the city's soaring crime to the last currency devaluation in late 1994.

It is against this backdrop that Cardenas, an engineer by training, assumes office. No one expects dramatic improvements in problems that have festered for decades, but residents say they are looking forward to more benevolent, honest leadership.

"If he only makes the city a more pleasant place to live, I give him my blessings because that seems almost impossible," said Cuauhtemoc Hernandez, 52, an insurance company executive and life-long resident of the capital.

Cardenas starts with his hands tied. Much like Washington, Mexico City is a stepchild of the federal government, with only limited home rule. More than one-third of the city's $4 billion annual budget is provided by the federal government, which is controlled by the ruling party. Cardenas inherits a $1.7 billion deficit that experts project could balloon to $2.7 billion by next year. The city has no authority to issue bonds to finance the repair or replacement of its dilapidated infrastructure.

This month, Cardenas had to ask President Ernesto Zedillo for permission before hiring his police chief and chief prosecutor. He immediately staked out an anti-crime position counter to the president's by announcing he plans to reverse Zedillo's policy of using military troops as city policemen.

Whether he can clean up the police department and at the same time strengthen its anti-crime mission remains to be seen.

Pope Seeks to Boost Church in Americas

Vera Haller in Vatican City

HUNDREDS of bishops from North and Latin America, summoned by Pope John Paul II to a month-long Vatican meeting, have been seeking to find ways to revitalize the Roman Catholic Church in the New World.

In their speeches at the special assembly, or synod, bishops from the United States indicated that the pope's call for a "renewed missionary zeal" will be no easy task. They said their mission, already challenged by opposition among many Catholics to church bans on contraception and divorce, has become even more difficult because they see U.S. society as becoming increasingly secular and focused on the individual.

"Heavy emphasis on the individual and his or her rights has greatly eroded the concept of the common good and its ability to call people to something beyond themselves," Bishop Donald W. Wuerl of Pittsburgh told the assembly last month.

The synod was presided over by the pope, who listened to the bishops' eight-minute speeches at the assembly. It concluded last week.

One of the main themes raised by U.S. bishops was their concern with what they view as the secularization of American society. "Where there was once a community and social structure that supported religious faith and encouraged family life, we now find an increasing lack of both the support and the encouragement," Wuerl said. "In the United States, a particular concern is the 'privatization' of religion and morality. Both are seen by many as matters of purely personal and private concern, such as a hobby or an appreciation of music, but without a proper role in the public arena."

Little of the debate has specifically addressed the disillusionment of many American Catholics in the Church over its stands on social and sexual issues. When it did touch on these subjects, the churchmen again placed blame on an overemphasis on the individual.

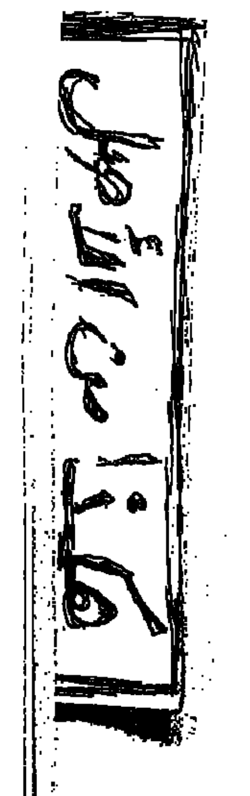
Cardinal Adam Maida, archbishop of Detroit, said. "We in the North are constantly seduced by the false voice of freedom that calls for individual choice, even to the point of a so-called 'right to die'."

He said North American Catholics could learn from Catholics in Latin America. "Because family relationships are a high value in your [Latin American] culture, individuals rarely die alone or unwanted."

The pope also said that the synod was an opportunity to develop church unity in the Americas, spanning the cultural and economic differences that divide north from south. But the debate has shown that concerns of Latin American bishops continue to reflect those differences. They said one of the most troubling problems is the growing presence of non-Catholic evangelical sects, whose popularity has been changing the religious fabric of Latin America, historically a Catholic domain.

Many bishops said the church should put pressure on the nations of the world to forgive, or at least ease, crippling foreign debt held by poorer countries. "When children go hungry or die from preventable disease, when more money is spent on debt service than on health care or education, then the cost of debt in human terms is unjustified," said Samuel Emmanuel Carter, former archbishop of Kingston, Jamaica.

One concern that bridges the north-south divide is how to minister to Latin Americans migrating to the north. Chicago Archbishop Francis E. George said these immigrants, leaving a culture shaped by Catholicism, are in danger of being drawn into the more secular lifestyle of the United States and should be drawn into a parish as quickly as possible.



Jazz, Most Glorious of Mongrels

Jonathan Yardley

THE HISTORY OF JAZZ
By Ted Gioia
Oxford 471 pp. $30.

THE TITLE of this book is commandingly peremptory: not "a" history of jazz, but "the" history of jazz. Yet The History Of Jazz lives up to that claim. It is a remarkable piece of work, not without its shortcomings or its invitations to argument but, withal, the definitive work: encyclopedic, discriminating, provocative, perceptive and eminently readable. With its publication, it can no longer be said that the literature of jazz falls far short of the music itself.

The sweep of Ted Gioia's narrative is grand, indeed it helps us understand just how grand the story of jazz really is. It begins in Africa, moves on to the cotton fields of the Deep South, to New Orleans, Chicago, New York, Kansas City, the West Coast, and finally establishes itself throughout the globe. It embraces a vast cast of characters, a few of them geniuses, some of them true "characters," almost all of them singular and endlessly interesting. It parallels the course of 20th-century American history with eerie accuracy, and it covers artistic changes and developments of breathtaking range.

If you are, as I am, old enough to have witnessed much of what Gioia describes, you will be both startled and delighted to grasp the full import of the story of jazz. When I was born, in October 1939, the greatest of the big bands were at the height of their glory; in the nearly six decades since then, the music has made its way through bop, hard bop, cool jazz, modern jazz, free jazz, fusion, the repertory movement and the new traditionalism — to name just a few of the styles that have come and gone, each leaving something to be assimilated into a tradition that grows ever larger, ever deeper, ever more complex.

It is tempting to go on and on at endless length, hauling out the names and the genres and the styles about whom and which Gioia writes with such authority, but lovers of jazz know them already and those who do not know the music well would find the exercise bewildering. Suffice it to say that his analysis of the giants — Armstrong, Ellington, Goodman, Parker, Gillespie, Mingus, Davis, Coltrane, Mulligan, Rollins — is keen, admiring yet unsentimental, at once distinctly his own yet incorporating the best of jazz criticism and scholarship. He writes with real originality about the distinctive contributions of the guitarist and raconteur Eddie Condon, a "secondary figure [who] managed somehow to become a primary source in the history of jazz"; the arranger Don Redman, "an influential link between the Jazz Age and the Swing Era"; the nonpareil drummer Sid Catlett, whose "two-decade career included gigs with Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, Fletcher Henderson, Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, a whole history of rhythm encompassed in those seven names"; and the pianist Lenny Tristano, prickly and monomaniacal, the "key elements" of whose style became "defining elements in jazz piano." So much that Gioia does along these lines is so fine that I could fill this page and several others describing and quoting from it. Instead, though, it is probably more useful to more readers to trace, in brief, the broader themes that are at the heart of this book. A few will seem familiar, others less so. But if they have all previously been brought together within the pages of a single book, one that makes the connections among all of them as astutely as this one does, I am unaware of it.


Charlie Parker . . . A jazz giant in a constantly evolving tradition

The most important is raised in a paragraph that deserves to be quoted in full, not merely for what it tells us about the development of jazz but for the light it sheds on how jazz is a distinctly contemporary art form:

"Jazz has *always* been a music of fusion. 'Nothing from New Orleans is ever pure' — so goes an old throwaway phrase. But even by Crescent City standards, early jazz was an especially complex melange. The Southern mentality that obsessively measured infinitesimal gradations — delineating differences of quadroon from octoroon the way Aquinas demarked angels from cherubim and seraphim — quickly came to a cul-de-sac in tracing the lineage of this radical new music. Impure at its birth, jazz grew ever more so as it evolved.

"Its history is marked by a fondness for musical miscegenation, by its desire to couple with other styles and idioms, producing new, radically different progeny. In its earliest form, jazz showed an ability to assimilate the blues, the rag, the march and other idioms; as it evolved, it transformed a host of even more disparate sounds and styles. It showed no pretensions, mixing as easily with vernacular musics — the American popular song, the Cuban *son*, the Brazilian samba, the Argentinean tango — as with concert-hall fare. Jazz in its contemporary form bears traces of all these passages. It is the most glorious of mongrels."

It is difficult to imagine a more succinct description of jazz's evolution and central character. Cross-fertilization is its dominant characteristic, which is why the balkanization to which its performers, composers and listeners are too often prone — dividing as they do along lines of style, of tradition and of, alas, race — is so unrelated to the true reality of the music.

JAZZ is a mix, as Gioia conclusively demonstrates, not merely of musical styles but of other influences, some of which are not immediately detectable: the phonograph recording and the radio, the ceaseless combat between art and commerce, a seductive, pervasive "mythology . . . that romanticized the jazz life," the pull between tradition and the "forward-looking" impulse of modernism. The point about jazz is not that everything within it seems so different but that everything connects.

The History Of Jazz is not absolutely perfect. Gioia deals with the questions of race that are so central to every aspect of it but tends to dance around them; an extended discussion of the conflicting and mutually reinforcing strains of Jim Crow and Crow Jim is missing, and is a major omission. Every reader's personal inclinations will at times run aground on Gioia's judgment; I happen to think he overrates Stan Kenton and, in emphasizing the "chamber-music style" of the Modern Jazz Quartet, underemphasizes its persistent, if at times subtle, swing. Never mind. If you are looking for an introduction to jazz, this is it. If you know and love jazz well, this is your *vade mecum*. Me, I expect to be reading around in it for the rest of my life.

Lebed, Loyal Son Of Mother Russia

Dusko Doder

GENERAL ALEXANDER LEBED
My Life and My Country
By Alexander Lebed
Regnery 385 pp. $29.95.

IT HAS been a pattern for Russia's leaders — if they hoped to command the sustained support of patriotic Russians — to advance the idea of Russia's uniqueness, the need for Russia to make herself felt in the world and assert her special virtues. Advocates of European parliamentarianism have been regarded as renegades and outcasts. The model to which civil society aspired has been one in which all men know their place and are organized for their own good in a harmony regulated by the state's leader; the army and the Orthodox church have been the visible expressions of this harmony.

I am not suggesting that all intelligent Russians have thought along these lines, even though politicians have. But many Russian intellectuals have voiced similar ideas; even Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who suffered terribly under communist tyranny and found refuge in the West, openly stated a preference for tsarist authoritarianism over the excesses of Western democracy.

Gen. Alexander Lebed, the latest and apparently most serious candidate to become the next master of the Kremlin, is no exception. His idea of Russia and its future rests on the unshakeable notion of Russian uniqueness: its Orthodox faith and military might. Restore the army's "former might and grandeur" and turn the Church into "a powerful spiritual state institution," he says, and "on this restored spiritual axis — the two forces of our great power — we can begin to feel like Russians again."

The book's title leaves no doubt that its plain-spoken author believes the vast Russian realm will one day be his to command. Even if this proves not to be the case, Lebed's book is essential reading for specialists and policy-makers — if for no other reason than the fact that polls show Lebed as by far "the most trusted politician" on the Russian scene.

The person who emerges from these pages is undeniably intelligent, courageous, self-confident, ambitious and xenophobic. He cultivates an attachment to the military ethos; his concern is for the common man. He projects unassailable sincerity, decency and honesty.

The first stage of Lebed's career coincided with the decade of the unravelling of the Soviet Empire. After Afghanistan, his elite paratrooper units were assigned police duty — putting down internal ethnic unrests that started in 1986 in Alma-Ata, then spread to Azerbaijan, Georgia, Tajikistan, the Baltics. The journey for Lebed was purgatory; it also shaped his outlook. He notes that more people were killed and wounded in these police actions than in Afghanistan.

Order and harmony are the most significant virtues in the eyes of a man who is seething with angry passions. While his career flourished — from lieutenant in Afghanistan to major general at the time of the August 1991 coup against Gorbachev — Lebed witnessed the decline of his country from a Great Power into an "emaciated developing country." His anger is directed at Soviet leaders, especially Gorbachev.

The general's tales are revealing. Senior officers are drunk; so are the doctors. (Indeed Lebed argues that "a normal Russian" is an alcoholic.) Incompetence is rampant, screw-ups are common; Lebed was twice officially reported dead, the first time at the end of his tour of duty in Afghanistan, the second time during the 1991 coup.

These anecdotes are presented in a way that helps Lebed reinvent himself: He was sleeping on a field bed in Afghanistan while incompetent nomenklatura communists enjoyed the gilded extravagances of the Kremlin and Barvikha. Nothing has changed since Yeltsin took over, he argues. "Look around you," he says; the old officials simply threw their Communist Party cards in the trash and hoisted democratic banners instead

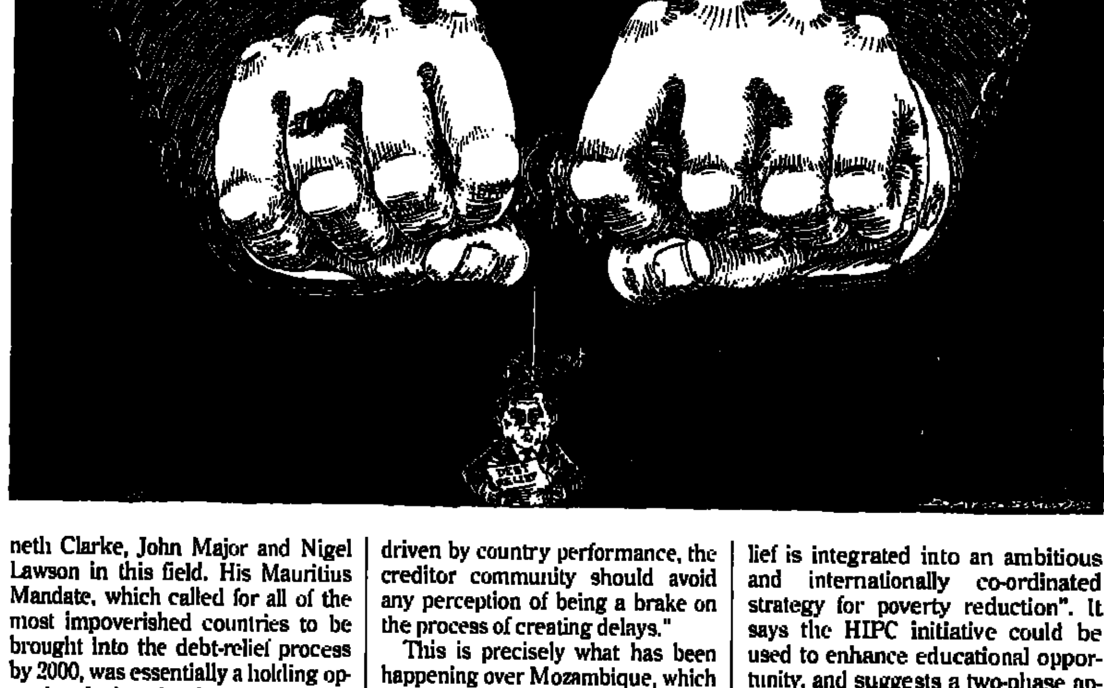
As a general and lifelong communist, Lebed was not only nomenklatura himself, but was regarded as sufficiently reliable by the anti-Gorbachev plotters to be dispatched to "establish and maintain" security and defense of the White House, the citadel of Boris Yeltsin's mutiny. At that point Lebed saw a chance for high destiny. He vacillated long enough to create the impression that he had sided with Yeltsin's rebels. Yeltsin's expression of thanks is quoted without Lebed's ever acknowledging that he had crossed over to "the people's uprising" (with disconcerting modesty he implies that he wanted others to take the limelight).

What measures he would adopt in order to solve his country's economic and social problems is not spelled out, except that when these difficulties seem "insurmountable" he would ask Peter the Great and other great Russian statesmen "for advice."

The basic message (for the Russian reader at least) is comforting, tranquilizing. It reminds me how slowly things in Russia change, and of a homily by a 19th-century tsarist police minister (and as such chief censor), which was the guiding star in shaping Russia's messianic spirit under the Romanovs and the communists: "Russia's past has been admirable," the minister said. "Her present is more than magnificent. As to the future, it is beyond the power of the most daring imagination to portray it."

Brown can shape world of opportunity

Chancellor should grasp the opportunity to help the poorest help themselves, writes **Larry Elliott**



CHRISTIAN AID has a smashing new TV advertisement. Based on the film Pulp Fiction, it shows a pair of hitmen stalking the corridors of a hospital in Tanzania. They burst into a ward where a sick child is about to receive a life-saving injection and snatch the syringe out the doctor's hands. One gunman says: "This child owes us $250. US dollars."

The other mobster pulls a dummy from the child's mouth and says: "A debt is a debt is a debt. Good job he's not from Mozambique. He'd owe us $350 then." The two men walk back down the corridor, chatting about where they will be sent next.

The British Advertising Clearance Centre says Christian Aid has breached the code that bans political or industrially controversial ads. So, unless the charity wins its appeal or gets the ad shown in the cinema, it is unlikely to be seen alongside those for cars, burgers and booze which, as everybody knows, are apolitical and industrially non-controversial.

The advertisement is a timely reminder to Western consumers that one-third of the world's population lives on a dollar a day and that, in terms of human development, 30 countries took a step backward in 1996. The total stock of developing-country debt has risen by about 50 per cent since the start of the 1990s to just under $2,200 billion.

Britain is keen to do something about this problem. One area where the last government had an unblemished record was in its struggle to reduce the debt burden of the world's impoverished nations. The UK Chancellor, Gordon Brown, is eager to emulate, even top, the efforts of Kenneth Clarke, John Major and Nigel Lawson in this field. His Mauritius Mandate, which called for all of the most impoverished countries to be brought into the debt-relief process by 2000, was essentially a holding operation designed to buy time for the UK to come up with something more imaginative.

James Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank, is keen for Britain to accelerate progress on the debt initiative for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPCs), now that the UK is chairing the meetings of the G7. Mr Wolfensohn is becoming increasingly frustrated about the delays being caused by the actions of creditor countries — primarily Germany, but also the United States — and is looking for Mr Brown to provide strong backing.

Writing to the Chancellor last week, Mr Wolfensohn said: "I agree that we should ensure that we are doing everything we can to speed further progress. While the pace of implementation must, of course, be driven by country performance, the creditor community should avoid any perception of being a brake on the process of creating delays."

This is precisely what has been happening over Mozambique, which is being seen, by Mr Wolfensohn and the aid agencies, as the litmus test of the entire HIPC initiative.

So what is Mr Brown to do? Over the medium term, the answer is for the Chancellor to back the Jubilee 2000 project, dedicated to wiping the slate clean for the most indebted developing countries by 2000.

But this will take some doing. Given German intransigence about selling International Monetary Fund gold and US insistence on absurdly tough conditions to qualify for debt relief, the UK is unlikely to shift attitudes before the G7 summit in Britain next May. However, there is a way for Mr Brown to achieve a breakthrough which also chimes neatly with his modernising agenda.

Oxfam International says the deadlock can be broken "if debt relief is integrated into an ambitious and internationally co-ordinated strategy for poverty reduction". It says the HIPC initiative could be used to enhance educational opportunity, and suggests a two-phase approach in which creditors would use debt relief to provide enhanced financial incentives through earlier and deeper debt relief. In return, debtor governments would accept stringent social conditionality and social-policy performance criteria.

In phase one, debtor governments work out how much it would cost to provide universal primary education and draw up an action plan for meeting both capital and recurrent costs. Phase two would see creditors agreeing to provide additional resources by providing earlier debt relief and deeper levels of debt reduction.

Treasury officials can, as ever, find reasons to oppose the Oxfam plan. Mr Brown would do well to ignore them. There are times when his famed stubbornness is a virtue. This is one of them.

How Monsanto reaps a rich harvest

George Monbiot, John Harvey, Mark Milner and John Vidal

MONSANTO, the company leading the global push to genetically engineered foods, received an unusual letter last month. Julie Draycott, from the Isle of Wight, wrote to its headquarters in St Louis, Missouri, demanding $10,200 compensation for the time, trouble and money she claims Monsanto costs her every year.

Sixty per cent of all processed foods contain soya, and Monsanto's beans account for up to 25 per cent of the United States crop, which is largely exported. Ms Draycott argued that as the company insists its genetically manipulated soya beans cannot be separated from ordinary beans, to avoid eating genetically engineered soya she must spend more time and money shopping and preparing food from raw ingredients.

Ms Draycott is still awaiting a reply and her life is set to get harder.

Monsanto, dubbed the Microsoft of biotechnology, has a global vision that embraces all the world's main crops. Backed by patents lasting 20 years, and starting with soya, it has moved quickly into genetically modified cotton, oilseed rape and corn. Almost every other major crop is in its sights.

The speed and scale of Monsanto's push for new-tech foods is awesome. Over two years, the biggest herbicide producer in the world has spent $2.5 billion to consolidate its position as the leading biotech company. It has bought up key companies associated with genetically engineered crops, crop breeding and molecular biology. Last year it spent $730 million on biotech research.

Monsanto is the darling of Wall Street. In three years its share price has soared from $11.50 to a high of more than $45 this past month.

The company's business genius lies not just in acquisition but in ensuring that its most lucrative chemical products reap rewards far into the future.

The key to Monsanto's operation has been its most successful herbicide, glyphosphate, sold under the name Roundup. Its patent runs out in 2000, however, allowing competitors to market similar products. So for 10 years it has been developing a range of new crops, genetically engineered to resist glyphosphate.

One legal condition of the purchase of genetically modified seeds is that the crops are treated only with Monsanto's Roundup herbicide. Spraying them with Roundup does them no harm, but destroys weeds around them. New patent legislation in Europe and the US, pushed by Monsanto and other biotech firms with backing from the US and British governments, allows Monsanto to secure exclusive rights to their production and collect "technology fees".

Monsanto says these new patented crops help growers and are environmentally friendly because they reduce the amount of weedkillers and pesticides needed. Some scientists, environmentalists and farmers dispute this.

In January, the New York attorney general's office forced Monsanto to withdraw advertisements claiming that Roundup is biodegradable and environmentally friendly. According to the school of public health at the University of California, glyphosphate is the third most commonly reported cause of pesticide illness among farm workers.

But Monsanto's pesticides and genetically modified crops are not their only products attracting controversy. In September, the World Trade Organisation ruled that the European Union would have to lift its ban on imports of beef and milk from cattle treated with Posilac, the growth hormone manufactured by Monsanto.

The WTO's decision is deeply unpopular in Europe, not only among Eurocrats, consumer and animal welfare groups. Farmers argue that, to compete with big American producers, they, too, will have to use Posilac. Scientists funded by Monsanto reported that cows treated with the hormone suffered only a minor increase in udder infections. But when the results were examined by independent researchers, they found that only part of the data had been processed.

A complete analysis revealed that white cells (or pus) increased by 20 per cent in the udders of some cows treated with Posilac.

Monsanto's growing domination of the food chain and the implications for health, the environment, competition and accountability are increasingly controversial.

Pioneer, the world's leading maize seed supplier, last month concluded after two years' talks with Monsanto that the company was seeking to dominate the technology available to farmers with its glyphosphate-resistant crops.

"We've gone from nothing to 19 million acres in two years," a Monsanto executive says. "Next year we'll double again. We're in Japan, China, Africa and South America. Biotech is ultimately democratic. It doesn't involve the farmer in capital goods. If you can compete with the world it's great. It's called free enterprise."

Women still failing to win top jobs

Lisa Buckingham

WOMEN account for fewer than one in five management jobs globally and almost always fail to reach the top of the world's most powerful corporations, a new report reveals.

The survey from the International Labour Organisation shows that, despite progress in North America, women executives have failed to crack, let alone break through, the "glass ceiling" — the invisible barrier said to block women's rise to the top. Despite the growing numbers of working women, companies remain reluctant to appoint female executives.

The ILO study, which collected statistics from around the world, coincides with research suggesting women workers over the age of 40 in Britain receive less than half of men's income. According to the Equal Opportunities Commission, women face a life of poverty. Their lower pay makes it harder to safeguard income when they are out of work, and those who are also carers are further penalised because career breaks make it harder to save for an adequate pension. Even though pay rates average half those received by men, women often do not qualify for social security benefits.

A huge disparity of achievement for women exists worldwide: 46 per cent of managers in the United States are women, whereas females command just 5 per cent of management posts in countries such as Pakistan and Argentina. The position in Turkey and Malaysia is little better.

The author of the ILO report, Linda Wirth, said women's lack of advancement occurred irrespective of ability. Where there have been gains in terms of executive seniority, these have largely taken place in sectors regarded as "women-friendly", such as leisure.

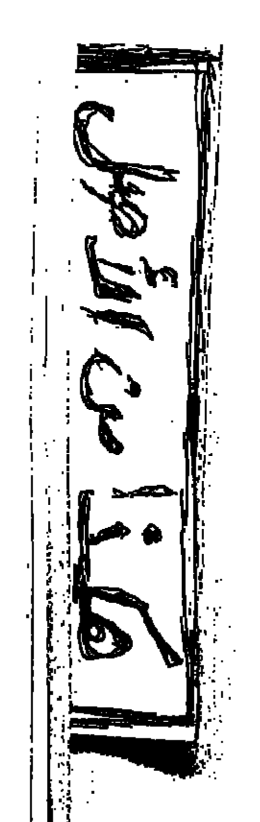
The gap between men and women at the top of global industry is, Ms Wirth asserts, "the most glaring example of employment segregation by sex that prevails across the entire spectrum of labour market opportunities".

Pity poor men, page 22

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates December 15	Sterling rates December 8
Australia	2.4859-2.4893	2.4637-2.4670
Austria	20.32-20.34	20.72-20.74
Belgium	60.07-60.17	60.75-60.84
Canada	2.3172-2.3196	2.3426-2.3448
Denmark	11.00-11.01	11.21-11.21
France	9.67-9.68	9.85-9.86
Germany	2.8892-2.8921	2.9459-2.9483
Hong Kong	12.65-12.66	12.74-12.75
Ireland	1.1227-1.1249	1.1330-1.1331
Italy	2,831-2,835	2,883-2,887
Japan	213.44-213.70	215.01-215.26
Netherlands	3.2557-3.2593	3.3195-3.3226
New Zealand	2.7576-2.7626	2.7489-2.7536
Norway	11.87-11.88	11.90-11.91
Portugal	295.40-295.74	300.65-300.99
Spain	244.58-244.89	248.75-249.07
Sweden	12.64-12.66	12.85-12.87
Switzerland	2.3330-2.3361	2.3926-2.3956
USA	1.6325-1.6335	1.6474-1.6484
ECU	1.4650-1.4666	1.4662-1.4677

FTSE100 Share Index down 88.6 at 5121.8. FTSE 250 Index down 4.85 at 4763.0. Gold down $4.55 at $286.75.



Specialising in the study of creative, cultural and social processes and committed to life-long learning

Goldsmiths UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Warden

GOLDSMITHS COLLEGE is seeking a person of distinction to head the College following the retirement of Professor Kenneth Gregory in September 1998.

Goldsmiths intends to build upon its considerable academic success and its national and international reputation at the forefront of specialist creative, cultural and social fields.

The new Warden will provide strong leadership, develop the College's research and innovative strengths, and have the necessary vision, dynamism and creativity to take this vibrant institution into the next phase of its development.

Applications are invited from suitably experienced candidates of the highest calibre.

Informal enquiries may be made to the Secretary, Mr S Guy, telephone 0171 919 7920. The closing date for applications is **24th January 1998.**

For further details of the post, please write to:

The Chair of the Council
c/o Secretary's Office
Goldsmiths College
University of London
New Cross
London SE14 6NW

Alternatively, you may e-mail s.guy@gold.ac.uk,

or visit Goldsmiths' World Wide Web home page at www.gold.ac.uk/warden

Goldsmiths seeks to promote equality of opportunity in all of its activities

---

Department of Politics

Chair in Political Theory

The University wishes to appoint to a new Chair in Political Theory in the Department of Politics. The department has a strong research profile in International Relations and Comparative Politics. This post has been established to redevelop its strength in Political Theory. You will be a scholar of high distinction, and will have the opportunity to undertake research, to lead and develop the lively and promising political theory section and to create courses for a well established set of graduate and undergraduate degree programmes. You will enhance the department's research profile and contribute to its leadership. Applications are invited from scholars in any area of Political Theory.

Informal enquiries are welcome and should be addressed to the Head of Department, Professor Joni Lovenduski, telephone: +44 (0)1703 594743, e-mail: jl@socsci.soton.ac.uk

Further particulars may be obtained from the Personnel Department (P), University of Southampton, Highfield, Southampton SO17 1BJ, telephone: +44 (0)1703 594046, e-mail: sjc3@soton.ac.uk or minicom: +44 (0)1703 595595, to whom a full curriculum vitae (10 copies from UK applicants, one from overseas applicants) should be sent by 16 January 1998. Please quote reference number P204.

Working for equal opportunities



University of Southampton



TEFL COURSES

Trinity College Certificate (4-week full-time) for those with no experience of teaching English. Trinity College Diploma (distance-learning) for experienced teachers.

Also, courses of English for foreign students.



For more details, phone
UK ++44 171 734 3689, fax 287 1623,
e-mail oxhc@easynet.co.uk
OXFORD HOUSE COLLEGE,
LONDON, 3, OXFORD STREET W1R 1RF

FAIRFAX UNIVERSITY (USA)

- Home Study degree programs
- Credits for prior learning/ experience
- BA, MBA, PhD etc programs
- http://www.bnternet.com - fairfaxuniversity.ees/INDEX.htm

Prospectus from UK representative office EES office (GUW), P.O.Box 400, Peterborough PE2 6GD UK
Tele/Fax: +44 (0) 1733 239923

ACTION HUNGER

Skilled workers required for humanitarian work in 27 countries. doctors, nurses, midwives, nutritionists, hydrologists, logisticians, agronomists, food security officers, financial controllers and coordinators for 1 year contracts. Unrestricted re-entry into Europe necessary. **Interviews in London, Paris, Madrid, New York. Send CV to Sally Tillett (GW697), 1 Catton St, London WC1R 4AB, UK.**

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK

Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

PROFESSORSHIP OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Applications are invited for the above newly created Chair. The Department of Public Administration is a core member of the Faculty of Commerce where it provides a range of courses to undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes.

The new senior position represents an initiative by UCC to strengthen its academic leadership in the area. As part of the academic plans of the Faculty of Commerce the Department of Public Administration is increasing its commitment to research. The Department's current strengths are in the fields of Public Management, Irish Local Government and Policy Networks.

Candidates must have high academic distinction with the capacity to provide leadership in the development of the discipline, and in the promotion of teaching and research and the ability to act as Head of Department. They should have capacity to represent effectively the discipline and the Department inside and outside the University. Candidates should also be willing to contribute to the overall management and development of the Faculty of Commerce.

For an informal discussion contact: Professor E.Cahill, Dean, Faculty of Commerce

Tel: + 353 21 902136 / Fax: + 353 21 903251 / Email: e.cahill@ucc.ie

Salary scale: IR £44,948 - IR£53,477,p.a.

Application forms and further details of this post may be obtained from Academic Appointments, Personnel Office, University College, Cork, Ireland.

Tel: + 353 21 902364 / Fax: + 353 21 271568 / Email: acad.per@ucc.ie

Closing date: Friday, 30th January 1998.

Information about the University may be accessed on the World Wide Web: http://www.ucc.ie

UCC is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR
COMMONWEALTH FOUNDATION

The Commonwealth Foundation is a London based inter-governmental organisation that promotes capacity building and skill sharing within the non-governmental sector (NGO) of the Commonwealth. It also operates programmes in the areas of professional development and exchange, and arts and culture.

The Deputy assists the Director in managing the Foundation, with special responsibility for implementing its strategic plan: the promotion of effective NGO/government relations, development of strategic relations with regional NGOs and other international agencies, and a major study of the changing role of civil society. Candidates need to demonstrate:

- experience and understanding of the voluntary sector and its interfaces with governments, the private sector and civil society;
- insight into Commonwealth issues;
- strong track record in project, organisational and financial management;
- proven ability in organisational strategy and policy development;
- excellent communication and diplomatic skills.

Salary (under review): UK resident £42,626 rising to £57,338, overseas recruit £43,219 rising to £58,133 (plus allowances). Initial contract: two years. For an information pack: Telephone: +44171 930 6014 Fax: +44 171 839 8157 or e-mail: geninfo@commonwealth.int. Only shortlisted candidates will be notified. Closing date: 4 February 1998

LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE & TROPICAL MEDICINE

Department of Infectious and Tropical Diseases

SENIOR APPOINTMENTS IN VIROLOGY AND BACTERIOLOGY

The School has reorganised its departmental structure in order to maximise the potential of its special blend of research expertise. A new department of Infectious and Tropical Diseases has been formed which includes all the laboratory-based research in the School as well as that on the clinical and epidemiological aspects of infectious and tropical diseases. This initiative is to be further strengthened by the appointment of senior research scientists in a number of specifically identified areas.

Applications are invited for a senior position in virology and a senior position in bacteriology. No specific areas of research have been defined but the persons appointed will have a strong laboratory research base in an area of virology or bacteriology consistent with the overall research objectives of the Department.

The persons appointed will have proven ability in research and in obtaining research funding, and be successful in directing the work of a research team.

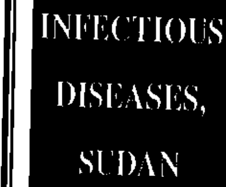
Starting salary will be commensurate with experience. Appointments at professorial level will be considered for appropriately qualified candidates.

Potential candidates are encouraged to contact the Head of the new Department, Professor Peter Smith (e-mail: psmith@lshtm.ac.uk; telephone: +44 171 927 2246). Further particulars and details of how to apply are available from the Personnel Officer, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, London WC1E 7HT (tel:+44(0)171 927 2203; fax:+44(0)171 636 4771; e-mail: personnel@lshtm.ac.uk). **Please quote Reference PSV (Virology post) or PSB (Bacteriology post). Closing date for receipt of applications: 16 January 1998.**

The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine is an equal opportunities employer.

COUNTRY DIRECTOR - ANGOLA

International Medical Corps (IMC), a private, nonsectarian, nonpolitical, nonprofit humanitarian organization that provides health care and training programs in developing countries and war-devastated areas, is seeking an outstanding professional to manage all aspects of IMC's varied humanitarian relief programs in Angola. The Country Director will plan, direct and implement current programs and in addition, propose and gain support for new programs. Required: Must have a noted track record in needs assessment, program design, evaluation and modification and budgetary/financial knowledge. Must possess excellent oral and written communication skills, donor and media relation skills and strong interpersonal skills. Masters in Public Health preferred with senior management experience. 3+ years of field experience. Send cv/resume to International Medical Corps, Attn: Lydie Roman, 12233 Olympic Blvd #280, Los Angeles, California, 90064 USA Tel: 310-826-7800. Fax: 310-442-6622, email: roman@imc-la.com



INFECTIOUS DISEASES, SUDAN

Immediate opportunity to make huge contribution in the lives of people affected with Sleeping Sickness in southern Sudan. International Medical Corps (IMC) seeks experienced Infectious Diseases M.D's and RN's. Previous international experience, strong leadership and communication skills essential. Highly flexible, people oriented and ability to work in hardship environment required. Portuguese and/or French language skills desirable but not required. Forward CV/resume to: J.Reynaldo, IMC 12233 West Olympic Blvd., #280, Los Angeles, CA 90064 USA Tel:(310) 826-7800, Fax:(310)-442-6622, e-mail: reynaldo@imc-la.com

---

Marlborough Brandt Group (MBG)/ Gunjur Development Agency (GUNDA) Partnership

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

Contract: 3 Years
Salary: £10-12,000

With a grant from the National Lottery Charities Board MBG/GUNDA are seeking a Programme Director to develop and co-ordinate an established development programme in Gunjur, The Gambia.

Applicants will be 35-50 years old and have at least three years of development experience, preferably in Africa with Muslim communities.

Likely to be accompanied (partner only). Closing date for applications and two references 31st January 1998. Short-listed candidates will be interviewed 28th February/1st March.

Further Information: The Director, MBG, 1a London Road, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8 1PH Tel: 01672 514078, Fax: 01672 514922.

Application forms/further details (please quote Ref. No.) Personnel Department, The Robert Gordon University, Schoolhill, Aberdeen AB10 1FR
Tel: (01224) 262085
Fax: (01224) 262080
E-Mail: staffing@rgu.ac.uk
Web: http://www.rgu.ac.uk/staffpers

THE ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY ABERDEEN

Scott Sutherland School of Architecture

LECTURERS/SENIOR LECTURER

(3-year fixed term) (Ref 879)

An opportunity has arisen for committed, enthusiastic and imaginative individuals to join the multidisciplinary team offering courses in Architecture, Interior Architecture, Architecture with Languages, Advanced Architectural Studies, Heritage Management and Scottish Architectural History.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate good design and teaching skills, as well as research capabilities.

Expertise in one or more of the following areas would be an advantage:

- Interior Architecture
- Environmental Science and Design
- Structures
- Computer Aided Architectural Design

Four vacancies have arisen on a fixed term basis for Lecturers. One of the posts may be available at Senior Lecturer level for which academic management skills and leadership qualities are required.

Salary scales -	Lecturer	- up to £27,759 per annum
	Senior Lecturer	- up to £34,978 per annum

Closing date: 22 January 1998



MINES ADVISORY GROUP

Vacancies: northern Iraq Programme

The Mines Advisory Group (MAG) is a humanitarian, non-profit NGO concerned with the impact of landmines on innocent communities worldwide. MAG has programmes in Angola, Cambodia, northern Iraq, Laos, Zambia and Zaire. MAG's global policy is to establish an indigenous capacity to respond to the long-term problem of mines.

MAG has been working in northern Iraq (Kurdistan) since 1992 with the goal of reducing the impact of mines and explosive ordnance on the population of northern Iraq. MAG northern Iraq employs over 700 local and 11 expatriate staff and has a budget of over $5 million. An expansion is planned for 1998.

PROGRAMME MANAGER

salary commences at £21,500 - permanent contract

Applicants should have senior management experience within an NGO and strong diplomatic and negotiating skills in an overseas context as well as experience of donor proposals and reporting, experience of strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, ability to empower local staff through training and clear communication skills.

ADMINISTRATION COORDINATOR

salary at £17,500 contract to December 1998

Responsible for logistics, purchasing and personnel. Tasks within contract period to include establishing simple, effective and sustainable systems and training in their use, setting up an internal auditing unit (with Finance Coordinator). The aim of the post is to train local staff to undertake the tasks listed above. Applicants should be available to commence as soon as possible.

FINANCE COORDINATOR

salary £17,500 contract to September 1998

Responsible for developing appropriate book-keeping, accounting and financial management systems for the programme, including appropriate financial checks and controls. Tasks include establishing simple sustainable systems and structures and the training of local staff in these. FC to work with Administration Coordinator in setting up internal auditing unit. Applicants should have an accounting qualification. The purpose of the post is to develop systems to enable and to train local staff to assume Finance Coordinator's responsibilities. Applicants should be able to commence as soon as possible.

For all posts a knowledge of Kurdish or Arabic and experience of working in areas of conflict would be desirable. With the fixed term contracts there is a possibility of extension depending on success and on budgets.

For information and application form contact Mike Watson, Personnel Officer, Mines Advisory Group, 54a Main Street, Cockermouth, Cumbria CA13 9LU, UK
fax: +44 1900 827 088
Closing date for applications is 16 January 1998.

SUCCESS WITH **ENGLISH** in SMALL CLASSES | 5 to 9 students per group | Individual Tuition

Sels College London

- Intensive English courses for foreign learners in small groups of 5 to 9
- Situated in the heart of London near the Royal Opera House
- Accommodation arranged
- Over 25,000 students have successfully studied English with us since 1975
- Recognised by the British Council

64/65 LONG ACRE, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON WC2E 9JH
TEL: +44 (0) 171 240 2581 FAX: +44 (0) 171 379 5793
email:english@sels.co.uk web site:www.sels.co.uk
Principal Y.Raiss BA, BSc (Econ), MEd, Barrister-at-Law, FRSA

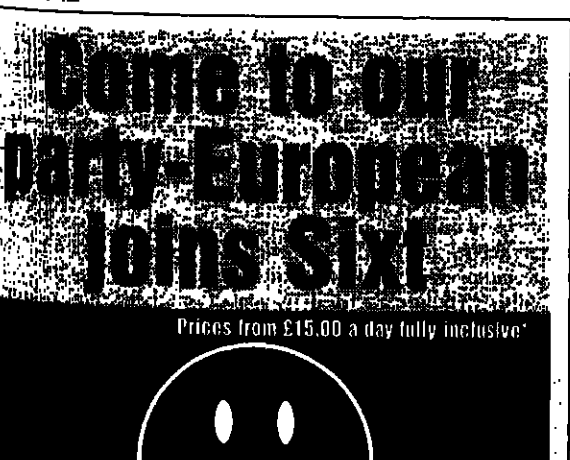
High Class Korean Restaurant seek

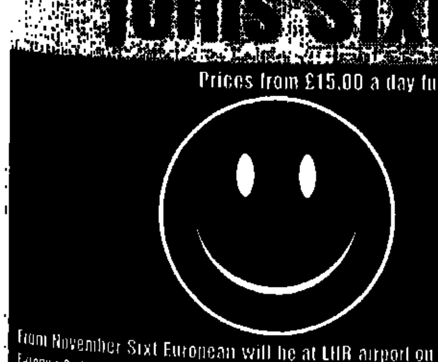
HEAD CHEF

Qualified in all aspects of Korean cooking.
10 Years experience at highest level
Fluency in Korean and English essential
Salary £20,000 +
Contact: Mr I Chee, Myung Ga Korean Restaurant, 1 Kingly Street, London W1R 5LF. Tel: 0171 734 8220

CLASSIFIED

CAR HIRE





From November Sixt European will be at LHR airport on all 4 terminals
Europe's 2nd largest car rental company has joined with European Car Rental. Find out why we are changing the face of car rental on:
Tel 44 1908 631144 / Fax 44 1908 375898
Email Reservations@ecr.co.uk

Sixt Rent a Car

On January 25th 1998 **The Guardian Weekly** will be publishing annual **Learning English** Supplement

To Advertise
tel: 00 44 161 908 3810
fax: 00 44 161 839 4436
email: weeklyads@guardian.co.uk

PERSONAL

Très bon anniversaire
FRANCK BERTRAND
Toujours avec toi, toujours dans l'attente
OLIVIA et SONIA
Tél. (Paris) : 01 47 64 37 12
Fax (Peshawar-Pakistan): 92 91 840 379

Out of Print books English and U.S.

Found and sent worldwide. A Helpful and efficient service with no search fees and no obligation. Write, fax or phone with your wants.

Caroline Hartley Booksearch
2 Hoole Street, Chesterfield, England S41 0AR Tel/Fax: +44 1246 558481
email:101707.65@Compuserve.com

PAMBER CAR HIRE U.K. PHONE:+44 (0) 118 944 2412
62 READING ROAD, WOODLEY, READING, RG5 3DB. FAX:+44 (0) 118 969 6295
SEND PHONE OR FAX FOR A BROCHURE TODAY FOR FULL DETAILS
WE MEET YOUR FLIGHT AND YOU CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY WITHOUT DELAYS.

WINTER BARGAINS

A	ROVER NISSAN FORD FIESTA	£105	D	FORD ROVER PEUGEOT 1.6 ESTATE	£165
B	FORD ESCORT ROVER 200	£140	E	FORD MONDEO 1.8/2.0 LX PEUGEOT 405 1.9 G.R	£170
C	ROVER 416 & 216 FORD MONDEO 1.6	£155	F	ROVER 820 SL1	£185

INCLUSIVE WEEKLY RATES

PAYLESS CAR RENTAL AT THE EXCELSIOR HOTEL HEATHROW, THE FORTE POSTHOUSE GATWICK AND MANCHESTER AIRPORT

	GROUP	7DAYS	14DAYS	21DAYS	28DAYS
ONE	PEUGEOT 106 VAUXHALL CORSA	95 00	186 00	274 00	353.00
TWO	ROVER 200	129.00	248.00	359.00	469.00
THREE	PEUGEOT 306 DIESEL	146.00	279.00	404.00	514.00
FOUR	TOYOTA COROLLA AUTO ROVER 200 AUTO	179.00	339 00	491.00	639.00
FIVE	PEUGEOT 406 MITSUBISHI CARISMA	199.00	389 00	569.00	739.00
SIX	PEUGEOT 406 AUTO	209.00	399.00	582.00	759.00
SEVEN	PEUGEOT 806	299.00	588.00	869.00	1099.00
EIGHT	TOYOTA PREVIA AUTO	349 00	679.00	949.00	1149.00

•RATES INCLUSIVE OF TCDW AND VAT •SHUTTLE BUS SERVICE FROM ALL TERMINALS •OPEN SEVEN DAYS •UNLIMITED MILEAGE •FREE ONE WAY HEATHROW - GATWICK •FRIENDLY AND EFFICIENT SERVICE

CALL OR FAX CENTRAL RESERVATIONS
TEL: +44 1794 830883 FAX: +44 1794 830884

ACCESS CAR HIRE U.K Tel. +44 (0) 1189 608204 Fax. +44 (0) 1189 608203
Horncastle Garage Ltd (Dept.X)
Bath Road, Reading, Berkshire RG30 2HS

SPECIAL OFFERS!!

AVAILABLE ON SELECTED MODELS
AIRPORT TERMINAL MEET & GREET SERVICE
PLEASE WRITE PHONE OR FAX FOR DETAILS

FORD FIESTA 1.1 LX
Only £199.00 for 2 weeks

Fully inclusive of comprehensive insurance CDW, delivery/collection to Heathrow, Gatwick or Central London, unlimited mileage and VAT.

TELECOMM

MOBILE PHONE HIRE

Top quality mobile phone or SIM card hire for the international GSM network on arrival to, or departure from, the UK
Delivered to your hotel, home, office or airport on arrival
Mobile number advised prior to departure
Pre-programmed with your important numbers
Prompt itemised billing on return



global PHONE LTD
Worldwide Specialists in Mobile Phone Hire
In association with vodafone

Tel (+44) (0)1483 420 690
Fax (+44) (0)1483 427 120
E-mail Sales@Global-Phone.com
HTTP: //www.Global-Phone.com

CAR HIRE

Thrifty Car Rental

- 10% discount on Published Tariff
- E-Mail address.
- Sports and classic cars available at Heathrow and Gatwick.
- New Sensational Value Club Card available from 01/04/97.
- Prices still from £99 per week (inc. of CDW and VAT).

Call, write, fax or e-mail us now quoting (GWY)

Tel: +44 1494 442110
Fax: +44 1494 474732

E-mail: davids@thrifty.co.uk
Thrifty Car Rental, The Old Courthouse, Hughenden Road, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP13 5DT

NEVER HIRE A CAR UNTIL YOU HAVE CHECKED KENDALL'S PRICES
200 Fine Cars, Vans, Estates, 7, 12 & 15-Seaters for Hire.
Airport Collection.
KENDALL CARS
34 Aldershot Rd., Guildford GU2 6AF
Tel: +44 1483 574434
Fax: +44 1483 34781

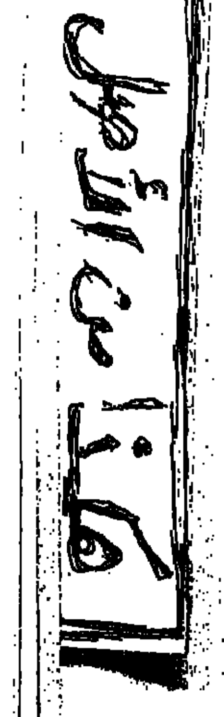
Hiring a car in the UK this year ? **County**

OUR PRICES WILL NOT BE BEATEN

Unlimited mileage meet & greet at Manchester/London

£99 pw

New Cars fully inclusive
TEL: +44 1483 860046
FAX: +44 1483 860187
email:ssd-county@btinternet.com.





Fay Weldon explains why she believes that feminism has gone too far

Pity the men of today

PERHAPS feminism goes too far? Perhaps the pendulum has stuck and needs nudging back to a more moderate position? Our young men, it seems, are in a sorry state: under-achieving in educational matters, if we are to believe a new report from London's Wandsworth Council, from the age of four. Parents don't bother to read to boys, apparently. These days, everyone wants girl babies, very few want boys. Males, disheartened, grow up to be, on the whole, unmarriageable. If one is to believe young women, that is.

When I was at college in the fifties, the professor of moral philosophy, faced by a small, hard-won female quota after centuries of male-only classes, would tell us: "Women have no capacity for rational thought or moral judgment." Not strange to us that he said it: strange now in retrospect that we young women didn't find the remark offensive. It was just the way the world was. We were going on to be wives and mothers anyway.

In the sixties, the professor of English was still returning essays to male students one by one, but throwing the rest in a heap, saying: "And those are the women's. Help yourselves." By the seventies, all kinds of other things began to get annoying. Job opportunities for women were opening up, but not promotion. Husbands were still "allowing" their wives to work, or "forbidding" them to join political parties and complaining about the size of their tits over dinner. Feminism took off. It could. Women were no longer dependent on men for their living. Women controlled their own fertility.

By the late nineties, find the gender switch thrown. It is men who complain of being slighted, condemned by virtue of gender to automatic insult by women. "Oh men! What do you expect?" They hear it all the time. Men, or so the current female wisdom goes, are all idle, selfish bastards/potential abusers/rapists/think with their dicks. So men shrink, shrivel and under-perform, just as women did once. Serve the men right, I hear women say. After all those centuries! But feminism was not after punishment or vengeance, simply justice.

Men grow restless; too many women, they complain, continue to believe that they are automatic victims, entitled to insult an oppressor who no longer exists. It is true, they acknowledge, that men continue to own and control what used to be called "the means of production", but the glass ceiling begins to shatter; below the age of 40, men and women level-peg in the promotion stakes. In 20 years' time, expect more women than men to be in top management, the gap between male and female earning capacity to be reversed.

In the seventies, men were able to say: "Feminism will never work. Women are too catty, too bitchy to one another, too competitive for men. They'll never get together." They were wrong. Women did.



Fay Weldon: 'It's left to me to speak for men' PHOTO: ROGER HUTCHINGS

"If you feel so bad about it all," I found myself saying the other day to a suffering young man, "why don't you do something about it? Get together with other men. Start a masculinist movement." I was irritated, half-joking. "Because it would never work," he replied. "Men are too competitive with one another for women. They'll never get together. They want female approval too much." Oh gender switch indeed!

It is left to me to speak for men, it seems, while they get their act together. Let me put it like this. Young nineties men complain that they are in a hopeless double bind. They care desperately for the good opinion of women. They want nothing more than to live a domestic life. If they show sensitivity, strive to be New Men, they are despised as wimps. If they keep a stiff upper lip, they are derided for their insensitivity.

Men, or so the current female wisdom goes, are all idle, selfish bastards/potential abusers/rapists. So men shrink, shrivel and under-perform, just as women did once

Women, young men complain, want them for only one thing. They find themselves treated as sex objects. If they make sexual overtures, they are accused of harassment. If they don't, the same thing happens. If he wants children, he has to search for a woman prepared to give him one. If he succeeds, if the women doesn't have a termination with no reference to him, he is expected to bond with the baby and do his share of child-rearing, but given no rights if the relationship goes wrong. Fathers can find themselves driven from the home with no warning, the locks changed, a new lover in the bed they once occupied, minimum visitation rights to the children and the merciless Child Support Agency after them. (Yes, yes, I know that for every one male horror story, there are probably 10 female ones, but 10 wrongs don't make a right.)

Girls are seen as having a better life. Girls do better at school, gain more qualifications, give you less lip, find it easier to get jobs, are better able to live without men than men can live without women. (Unmarried men die sooner than men who are married. Unmarried women live longer than their married sisters. Marriage for women is a pain.) Sons are more likely to be schizophrenic, autistic or criminal and not to survive beyond the age of 25. You don't see many girls selling the Big Issue. Daughters are more likely to grow up to look after you in your old age.

Girl power triumphs, certainly in the metropolitan areas, though the further you go out of town, the more the old ways survive. See the current fashion for male loutishness, for Men Behaving Badly, as a desperate cry for help — hopefully female help — from a drowning gender.

I do not think for one moment that women should be complacent. The price of female liberation is eternal vigilance. Maintaining a just society in an unjust world is no easy matter. This is still the age of the Taliban. In Afghanistan, women who were once engineers, businesswomen, teachers, writers, social workers, earners of all kinds, have been driven back indoors and shrouded in black by fanatical young men who live by principle, however odd that principle seems to us. It is not likely to happen here, but nasty surprises can still occur. (Hitler solved Germany's high unemployment at a stroke by barring women from the workplace.) The answer is, not to rouse the antagonism of men by insult — but to remember that men are people, too, and to try to see them as person first and of a certain gender second, as once we beseeched men to do for us.

Back in the seventies, the personal became the political. The speed and energy with which the notion took off startled everyone. On the whole, the revolution succeeded magnificently. The female predicament, once it was shared with others, acknowledged by all, swiftly became a matter not just of common concern but of social significance. Weeping into the solitary pillow turned into banners at the demo. Once women began to compare notes, it was no longer possible for men to pick them off, one by one, to bully and insult. Dish-washing, childcare, the until then invisible occupations of women, could be seen as "work"; marriage could be viewed as a form of slavery. Now literature and art could take on the domestic themes at the heart of personal life and be taken seriously. And the only sanction ever applied was female disapproval. That was astonishing. It may have gone to our heads.

The impetus for change rolls on, perhaps after the necessity has passed. Forget the personal becoming the political; the political is now becoming the personal. Some remark on how government itself has recently become feminised. New Labour certainly presents itself as female, using the language of compassion, forgiveness, apology, understanding and nurturing, qualities conventionally attributed to women. It wants to be loved. The old traditionally male values of constancy, gravitas, restraint, heroism, dignity and honour are seen as belonging to a past world. Perhaps they do. Perhaps it is no bad thing.

Where the feminist revolution failed, where women still have cause for lamentation and where they are least powerful, is when it comes to their children. Sure, fathers now bond with babies and are seen in number at the school gate, but it's the problem of the working mother everyone talks about, not of the working parent and certainly not of the working father. The dream of equal parenting has not come true. Exhaustion takes its place.

Women may have achieved equality and even be on the road to superiority, but *mothers* somehow remain a separate case. The child cries, her heart hurts, that's it. While she looks after the baby, someone, somehow, has to support the pair of them. Some women solve the problem by not having children at all. For others, the state takes the place of the husband or partner and does the providing. Department of Social Security benefits have so far flowed from a reliable if grudging source. But here too, I fear, the gender switch has been thrown, and not in a benign manner. Mummy is taking over from Daddy and finds it in her heart to be harsher than he ever was. "Out you go to work," she snaps to the lone mother. "I'm a woman, I'll look after the baby, I'll call it Welfare to Work. But frankly, I can't stand you hanging around the house all day doing nothing. You should never have had this baby in the first place. I know your sort!"

The state, once feminised, turns all too easily into a Wicked Stepmother. Well, nothing's for nothing.

Big Women by Fay Weldon will be published in Britain by HarperCollins on January 19

Fall of the north star

OBITUARY
Shehu Musa Yar'Adua

FOR observers of Nigeria, the death in prison of the former military vice-president, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, at the age of 54, was no shock. It could have been Chief M K L Abiola, the expected winner of the aborted 1993 presidential elections or Yar'Adua's ex-chief, General Olusegun Obasanjo. It is a cold and iron age in a country of military corruption and misrule whose prisons brim with political prisoners.

Some have already pointed out that when Kudirat, the wife of Abiola, was shot dead in broad daylight in Lagos in 1996 the heavens did not fall. Others have recalled the 1995 execution, amidst international entreaties, of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others to buttress their conviction that Yar'Adua's death will, at worst, only embarrass the government of General Sani Abacha.

But they miss the point. Yar'Adua belongs to a different class. Abiola's strength is in the southwest, but Yar'Adua was born in Yar'Adua village near Katsina in the northernmost part of Nigeria. By virtue of his Fulani origins, he belonged to a relatively small but politically astute ethnic group affiliated to the Hausa who have, either directly or indirectly, always controlled the levers of power in Nigeria. His father was a minister in the First Republic government of Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, terminated in the country's first coup d'état in January 1966.

At the time of that coup Yar'Adua was an army lieutenant in Eastern Nigeria. During the civil war, he fought the Biafran secessionists, rising by 1970 to brigade commander.

In 1975, Lt-Col Yar'Adua, backed by Brigadier Murtala Muhammed, teamed with other middle-ranking officers to topple General Yakubu Gowon's régime. Yar'Adua became transport minister under Murtala Muhammed — who was killed six months later in a failed coup attempt. Olusegun Obasanjo replaced Murtala as head of state, and Yar'Adua leapfrogged at least 15 senior officers to become Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters and number two to Obasanjo.

In 1979, the Obasanjo régime relinquished power to President Shehu Shagari's elected government and Major General Yar'Adua, still only 36, retired from the army.

When General Abacha seized power in November 1993, he set up a constituent assembly, to which Yar'Adua won election and from where he orchestrated the body's overwhelming motion that Abacha should relinquish power immediately. Soon after, Yar'Adua and Obasanjo, along with many others were arrested and tried in secret. Yar'Adua's death sentence was later commuted to 25 years in prison after an international outcry.

From prison he still wielded enormous influence. Those who witnessed his funeral in Katsina said the mourners were in tens of thousands. With Yar'Adua's passing another part of the regional jigsaw of opposition to Abacha has fallen into place.

Chuks Iloegbunam

Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, soldier, born March 5, 1943; died December 8, 1997



Call to alms: landmine victims such as Omar Maazik (pictured left, with his family) receive little in the way of compensation PHOTO: MATT MOYER

Innocent victims of the Devil's Garden

Landmines laid at the time of El Alamein are taking a heavy toll on local Bedouin tribes. **Julian Borger** reports

IT IS a corner of a far-flung land that is for ever England. Not just because of the neatly groomed lines of graves in the British and Commonwealth cemetery, the clink of teacups in the museum canteen and the quiet nostalgia of greying visitors sweating in their blazers.

The real reason El Alamein is forever England is the fact that — more than 50 years after the war — its Bedouin herders are still being killed and maimed by British landmines.

There are German and Italian mines beneath the surrounding desert too, but most were laid by Field Marshal Montgomery's Eighth Army in the months before the decisive 1942 battle which made the Mediterranean village a legend. The defeated German general, Erwin Rommel, called the desert plateau the Devil's Garden. And for all those whose livelihoods still depend on its meagre grazing, that is what it remains today. It is the most heavily mined place on Earth, with more than 18 million lethal weapons buried in the sand, more than in Angola, Mozambique and Bosnia put together: there may be more casualties in these countries, but that is because the mines are buried in more densely populated areas.

Now that banning landmines is in geo-political fashion, the Egyptian government has seized the moment to demand Europe's ex-combatants return to clear up the lethal mess they left behind. It points out that El Alamein is the perfect example of how mines can continue to kill and maim generations after they were laid. Cairo complains that it has so far received nothing but token donations — a few dozen mine-detectors and words of encouragement.

In Ottawa this month Egypt refused to sign the treaty banning anti-personnel landmines, partly in protest at Western inaction over second world war mines. Meanwhile the population of El Alamein feel they are forgotten victims of someone else's war which refuses to end.

The latest fatality was only months ago, bringing the post-war death toll from El Alamein's mines to more than 400. Another 4,500 people have been maimed — an average of 100 casualties a year.

Scarcely any El Alamein families have been left untouched, and some have been torn to shreds. Omar Maazik has lost four cousins to the mines. The youngest, Said, was blown up in the mid-eighties when he was eight years old. Said's father lost an arm soon after. Omar was blinded in 1984 when he picked up a mine detonator while playing near his house.

"Maybe the ones who die are luckier. But if we die, or turned blind, it is the same thing. Our families are left with no one to support them," said Maazik. Like all the local Bedouin, when he talks about an explosion in the desert, he said the mine "spoke". The people of El Alamein have become bitterly accustomed to what the mines have to say.

For losing his sight, the state paid Maazik compensation of about $65. The loss of a leg in a landmine accident is valued about the same. Compensation for an amputated arm is $40. Families of the dead often receive nothing at all since, without a surviving witness, the police are generally reluctant to venture into the desert to collect evidence.

There is rarely compensation for loss of fingers, although that is the most common injury, usually inflicted by mine detonators. Several Bedouin men held up deformed palms in half-mocking welcome on discovering they were meeting a British visitor. An Egyptian in nearby Alexandria called El Alamein "the village of the empty handshake".

The impoverished settlement is scarcely bigger today than it was in 1938, when an advance guard of British officers arrived to establish a line of defence against an expected Italian assault from Libya. It was a natural bottleneck on the Libyan plain, between the Mediterranean and the Qattara depression where the terrain drops steeply 40 miles to the south. It was in that bottleneck that the Eighth Army stopped Rommel's Afrika Korps and turned the tide of the North Africa campaign in 1942.

The British built water cisterns and a railway line to bring supplies from Alexandria. The buildings they left behind in the village's forlorn station, at the end of its dusty main street, eerily echo England's pre-war suburbs. When the British troops came, Daoud Mishri Hassan was eight years old. He made a living selling food to the Desert Rats, and he can still recite the daily wartime bargains in a marked cockney accent: "How much for eggs? Six for five! Cooked or fresh? Fresh!" He remembers Monty ("Thin, with a long nose . . . always in his tank") and the relative kindness of many of the British and colonial troops. "The English used to treat the Arabs very well. Much better than the Italians and Germans. They lived among us. Then, when the war came, they evacuated the Arabs to where it was safe," he recalled.

Hassan remains an Anglophile, living among the crumbling remains of one of the British water-pumping stations. His son rummaged in a sack and produced the remains of old Desert Rat uniforms, while Hassan pressed the remnants of his wartime English into an improvised commiseration: "Diana dead. Sorry." But on the question of why, despite the inspiration of the Princess of Wales, the British have not returned to remove their mines, he admits he is bewildered. "Ask them why they don't come," the 67-year-old Bedouin said.

HASSAN said the only serious foreign attempt to remove the mines was a short-lived Italian expedition in the mid-1950s. "They put skull-and-crossbone markers where the mines were and put up barbed wire. But they left after a couple of years when their contract finished, and with the rain and the wind the signs and the wire fell apart." Across the road from Hassan's home, there is a small Egyptian army post — a few one-storey buildings and some bricks marking the paths between them. A small detachment of sappers has been posted here for the past decade but have achieved little in the absence of experts and modern equipment.

Last month Jabril Omran, a 30-year-old Bedouin, came across an exposed mine only a mile from the village: "I was looking for a place to pee when I stumbled on it. I went straight back to tell the family because we live in this area. One of my cousins has lost two fingers." After persistent nagging by Cairo, the British government earmarked $800,000 last year for mine clearance. It was at least better than nothing, which is what the German government has offered so far for its part in contaminating the desert.

An Egyptian foreign ministry official said: "The Germans will give money for agricultural projects, but if it's anything to do with the war, they don't want to talk about it. Why should we suffer because they don't want to discuss responsibility?" The British funds have paid for 50 mine detectors, none of which has been seen so far by the people of El Alamein. Egyptian officials say they may have been used to clear more recent Israeli and Egyptian mines from the Sinai desert, where the beach resorts are foreign currency earners.

Mahmoud Karem, the head of the disarmament department in Egypt's foreign ministry, called Britain's donation "token assistance": it costs an average of more than $300 to remove each mine. "As Egyptians we have a very serious problem. Our territory was used by others to plant these landmines. Yet over 50 years later they are incapable of reaching an agreement to clear these mines. No one wants to deal with it."

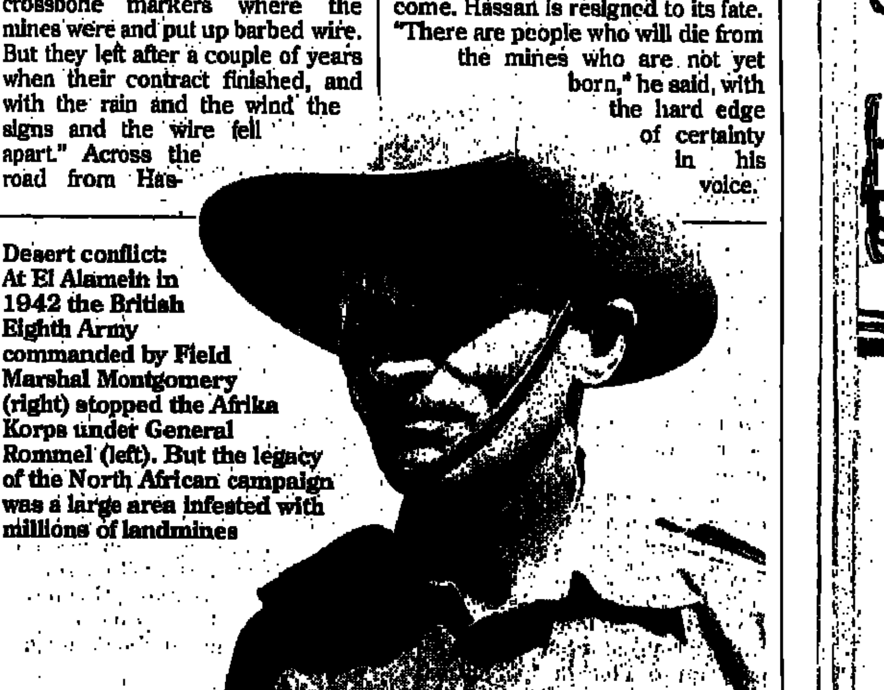
He said Egypt needed advanced equipment which can see deep into the sand to where the mines have slipped over time. Only when it has been completely cleared, he said, can the Western Desert fulfil its true economic potential. The Egyptian government says it has already removed 11 million mines and is reluctant to spend more on the remaining 18 million without international support. El Alamein is likely to remain the village of the empty handshake, trapped in the Devil's Garden for a long time to come. Hassan is resigned to its fate. "There are people who will die from the mines who are not yet born," he said, with the hard edge of certainty in his voice.

Mediterranean Sea
Alexandria
EGYPT
El Alamein
Cairo
Battle zone
Qattara Depression
160 km

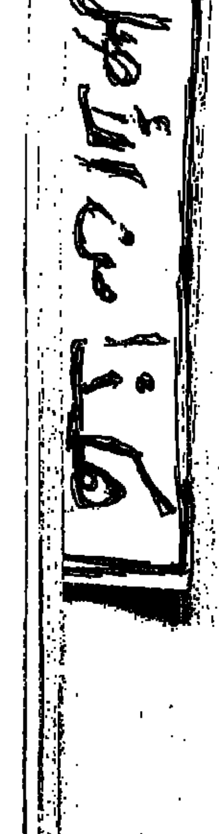
Landmines, millions

Egypt	23
Iran	16
Angola	9-15
Iraq	10
Afghanistan	10
Cambodia	8-10
Bosnia	2-3
Croatia	2
Mozambique	2

Source: Landmine Data Base, Dept of Humanitarian Affairs



Desert conflict: At El Alamein in 1942 the British Eighth Army commanded by Field Marshal Montgomery (right) stopped the Afrika Korps under General Rommel (left). But the legacy of the North African campaign was a large area infested with millions of landmines





Letter from Pakistan Mary Dunlop

Karachi Christmas

CHRISTMAS in Karachi creeps up, almost without warning and not only because of the warm, sunny weather.

Without weeks of outrageously priced toys, aggressively advertised on television, we are spared coping with yard-long lists of "must haves". There are no Christmas carols blaring in the bazaars, no two-hour queues outside Father Christmas grottoes. Actually, Father Christmases are a bit thin on the ground.

One year, Jawad, a friend from Afghanistan, answering the knock at our door, promptly slammed it shut. "They are *paqal* — mad — or they are dacoits," he cried in alarm. "Don't open the door. They might be dangerous." Peeping through the screen, I discovered three carol-singing Santas. Complete with white beards, thick red suits and boots, sweat poured off them as they sang about midwinter snow scenes and moaning frosty winds. Karachi children have never seen as much as a snowflake. No wonder Jawad suspected insanity.

We usually attend the midnight mass held by the Franciscans in the grounds of the Friary. Some of our Muslim friends join us, and are made welcome by the Franciscans and the congregation.

Their attitude is in stark contrast to the reception at St Patrick's Cathedral, where non-Christians are barred from entering. Armed policemen guard the gates to prevent any Muslims sneaking in. Quite how they make the distinction I never dared to ask. The Pakistani Christian community presents itself as a beleaguered, victimised minority group. Their attitude to sharing their worship with outsiders makes one wonder if this problem is not — at least in part — of their own making.

The Franciscans appear to have no such hang-ups. Possibly that is because their annual Nativity play, performed by the local children — and live animals — prevents them from duplicating the pompous solemnity of midnight mass at the cathedral.

The first year, Mary's donkey, digging in his heels, refused to be led into the stable. A couple of Franciscan brothers finally tethered him outside when the beating he received from a flustered Joseph had no impact. Mary dismounted, the infant Jesus dangling precariously from her arms. Unsettled by his treatment, the baby began to scream lustily. Mary, at first showing all the requisite qualities of loving, maternal concern, tried to soothe him. When this had no effect, her madonna-like calm vanished and she proceeded to shake Jesus quite vigorously. He screamed louder, drowning out the priest's words. In a temper, hitching up her robes, Mary strode across the compound to return the Christ child to the arms of his — by now rather frantic — biological mother.

In the ensuing peace, the next reading began. The congregation pretended to ignore the goat. He was single-mindedly chewing through a guy rope holding up the canvas pavilion. No one, however, could ignore the donkey. The priest had only managed the first few verses before the donkey which, with an unmistakable erection, began his braying love song. Shoulders shook as the congregation attempted to stifle its laughter. When Mary — in ringing tones — crossly told the littlest angel, with a wingspan equal to that of a golden eagle, that he had got his lines wrong, everyone cracked. The Christmas message was delivered amidst peals of laughter.

The following year, the Franciscans dispensed with both donkey and baby Jesus. The shepherds, however, brought their sheep. These are rather special. Small, white and very fluffy, looking like expensive, cuddly toys, they are sold on the street corners near Tariq Road, Karachi's fanciest shopping area. The shepherds, following the star, their sheep led on lengths of string, processed across in front of the congregation. Shepherds number one and two managed without mishap. Number three thought he had. Unfortunately his sheep had fallen over and was lying on his back, legs in the air.

Realising he was meeting with some resistance, but without looking back, the shepherd tugged hard on the string. The lamb, bleating plaintively, was dragged slowly along. The giggles of the congregation erupted into gales of laughter. The five-year-old shepherd, at last tearing his gaze from the star, paused to glare forbiddingly at the audience. His expression clearly said, "This is not the time for laughter. This is serious stuff." With a last desperate tug on the string, he and the hapless sheep exited, stage left.

No doubt, this year's Christmas message will again be delivered amid delighted laughter — we even heard a whisper that the disgraced donkey may have been rehabilitated.

Robot takes the shakes out of surgery

John Illman in Orlando, Florida

ROBOTS are being used in tests to revolutionise coronary artery bypass surgery. They control miniature instruments, such as scissors, needles and "graspers", and handle a voice-activated camera for the "keyhole" operation.

Conventional surgery usually involves a 30-45cm incision and leaves a large scar, but the robot could mean only three small puncture wounds, about 3mm in size.

"It's a gigantic step forward," says Dr Edward Stephenson, surgical research fellow at Penn State Geisinger Health System in Pennsylvania.

The secret is in the hands — human hands are not so steady. Filtering the motion to eliminate tremors means a robot can spend long periods stitching sutures as fine as human hair without so much as a twitch.

But the robot is not taking over. Dr Stephenson told the American Heart Association last month: "The robot merely enhances the surgeon's natural ability."

The surgeon views the heart on a television monitor and controls the operating instruments via a voice-activated computer link which maps every movement, passing on the instructions to the robot.

Dr Ralph Damiano, chief of cardiothoracic surgery at Penn, says: "You're holding the handles which are interfaced with a microprocessor that translates your motions to the robotic arms."

The surgeon can literally tell the camera where to go, with verbal commands such as "left" and "return".

Dr Stephenson's was one of 4,000 presentations at the world's biggest medical meeting, in Orlando, Florida, highlighting a dazzling variety of new ways of treating "the Western way of death", as cardiovascular disease is known.

Human hands are not as steady as a robot PHOTOGRAPH: SAM TANNER

There was the laser which heals by drilling 40 holes, each 1mm long, into the heart allowing blood from the pumping chamber to percolate into the surrounding muscle. This has reduced disabling chest pain in patients who are poor candidates for other types of surgery and whose heart muscle is so deprived of oxygen that they cannot rest without pain.

The meeting also heard about gene therapy to grow new blood vessels in the leg. The idea is to bypass old vessels which have been clogged up by atherosclerosis, the same process that furs up the coronary arteries.

The key is the genetic material that produces growth factor, which stimulates the creation of blood vessel cells in the human embryo. The material injected into the patient's legs "instructs" blood cells to regenerate vessels.

Dr Jeffrey Isner, of St Elizabeth's Medical Centre, Boston, says: "Since this approach works in the leg, it should work in the heart."

Such techniques cost millions of dollars to develop, but the heart disease industry is one of the world's richest. The Orlando conference, with more than 40,000 delegates and a 500-page programme, was as much a "heart mart" as a scientific meeting: 450 medical equipment and pharmaceutical companies were on show.

Traditionally, prevention is better than cure, but you would never have thought so in Orlando. The gold lies in pills and in surgical and diagnostic innovation. There is no profit in eliminating disease.

In Britain, coronary heart disease costs the National Health Service at least £1.6 billion a year. Hospital care accounts for 56 per cent of these costs and drugs about 31 per cent. Only about 1 per cent of the total budget goes on prevention.

The conference was told that taking one of the so-called "statin" class of drugs, pravastatin, may be a more effective way than dieting for some people to reduce cholesterol.

Perhaps it is easier to apply medical treatment than change British culture. In 1930, coronary heart disease accounted for about 1 per cent of diagnosed UK deaths. The figure is now 30 per cent. — *The Observer*

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

DOES anyone know of an effective cure for morning sickness in early pregnancy?

ALAN ASHLEY (December 7) was dangerously misleading. Morning sickness occurs primarily as a normal physiological response to the production of pregnancy-protecting hormones in the maturing placenta. It is not the body's way of coping with the elimination of waste products, as the kidneys perform this function perfectly adequately throughout pregnancy. Nor is there a need for a "temporary rest from the work of digestion". Unlike most causes of vomiting, morning sickness often responds positively to food intake. Many pregnant women report that eating one or two dry biscuits immediately on waking helps considerably. The higher calorie demands of pregnancy should be met by taking frequent small snacks and plenty of fluids until the problem eventually subsides. — *(Dr) J M England, Tonbridge, Kent*

THE more exercise taken, the better. — *Anne Carpenter, Clevedon, North Somerset*

I SUFFERED badly from morning sickness. I found out that there is really only one cure (which has a 100 per cent success rate): I gave birth. — *Sue Berntsen, Narvik, Norway*

IS THERE any truth in the story that eucalyptus trees can spontaneously combust?

EUCALYPTUS trees cannot spontaneously combust as they do not have a flashpoint. During a large bush fire, the crown can be separated from the remainder of the tree by the excessive force of the fire. Once launched, it can reach heights of around 5,000ft and travel up to 14 miles while still alight. Once it falls, it could possibly start a new fire. — *Ewen Hill, London*

HOW long can I use the air-recycle button in my car, which stops air from outside entering the cabin, before suffocating?

IT DEPENDS on the size of the cabin and the number and mass of the occupants. They would be intolerably uncomfortable long before there is any question of suffocating because the build-up of carbon dioxide and fall of oxygen stimulate breathing powerfully. If the former rises to 8 per cent and the latter falls to 11 percent, you would feel as you might if you held your breath for about 90 seconds. But the haemoglobin in your blood would still be about 93 per cent saturated with oxygen, and there would be no problem with oxygen supply or carbon dioxide narcosis.

How long would it take to get to this point? Assuming no leaks (which is highly improbable), two occupants each weighing 70kg, and a cabin volume of, say, 4,000 litres, the occupants would together exhale 0.4 litres of carbon dioxide per minute. To raise the carbon dioxide level to 8 per cent would take about four-and-a-half hours. — *David Bolton, Dunedin, New Zealand*

MANY cars have a system that will automatically switch to fresh air after about 20 minutes. Even when recirculation is switched on, at least 5 per cent of fresh air is still drawn in, so suffocation is unlikely. If your car has air conditioning, it is much more efficient if you use it with the air-recycle button switched on. — *Nigel Shepherd, London*

Any answers?

IN this modern age of miracle synthetic materials, why can't someone come up with a windscreen-wiper blade that does not screech when the screen is dry? — *Joe Boyle, Torrevieja, Spain*

A FRIEND of mine said she had become manic and bad-tempered after eating one banana each day for a week. Is this the origin of the phrase "going bananas"? — *Jane Devane, London*

CAN the Queen cook? — *Stephen Hancock, Amsterdam, Netherlands*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries website is at http://nq.guardian.co.uk/

After a bizarre courtroom saga, three men were jailed in Pisa this year for a murder that took place in 1971. **John Hooper** reports

Leaning tower of justice



Life sentence . . . (from left) Adriano Sofri, Ovidio Bompresi and Giorgio Pietrostefani, convicted of murder despite numerous contradictions in the testimony of the star prosecution witness PHOTO: FABIO MUZZI

IT WOULD need a Dickens — or better still, an Orton — to tell properly the story of Adriano Sofri and his erstwhile comrades. It is a case so outlandishly at odds with the principles of reasonable doubt and presumed innocence that it cries out for protest.

In Italy, it has become a *cause célèbre*. A nationwide campaign for the release from prison of the three men at the heart of it has attracted supporters from left and right — indeed, the Liberi, Liberi (Free, Free) movement, as it is known, is fast becoming a focus for the country's amorphous civil liberties movement. It has put on a concert at the prison in Pisa where the three are being held. It has got up a petition. It has set up a website. And the rightwing newspaper editor, Giuliano Ferrara, has given Sofri a daily slot, which he writes from jail.

The story goes back almost three decades. Adriano Sofri was the definitive *sessantottino* ("sixty-eighter"). He was the leader of probably the biggest of the revolutionary leftwing groups that rose to prominence in Italy after the student revolt of 1968. His group was known, stirringly, as Lotta Continua (Continuous Struggle), but it was to prove an inappropriate label: in 1976, after the masses failed to support the revolutionary left in the general election, Lotta Continua dissolved in a paroxysm of despair at a congress in Rimini. Sofri became a teacher and journalist, and last year won the gratitude of his government for negotiating the release of three Italians held hostage by Chechen guerrillas. But by that time he was nearing the end of a bizarre voyage through the courts that had lasted for almost a decade.

On July 28, 1988, he and two other former members of Lotta Continua were arrested and charged with the murder of a man who has a place in Italy's literature as well as its history. Luigi Calabresi was a senior police officer. It was from the window of his office, on the fourth floor of police headquarters in Milan, that a young anarchist, Pino Pinelli, fell, or jumped, to his death while being interrogated in 1969. The incident inspired Dario Fo's play, Accidental Death Of An Anarchist. Calabresi was relentlessly pilloried, nowhere more so than in the pages of Lotta Continua's newspaper. In 1971, he was put under investigation for murder. But the case was shelved.

A few months later, a man described by eyewitnesses as tall and blond stepped up to Calabresi as he was leaving his house in Milan and killed him with two pistol shots.

Sofri and the others were arrested, 16 years later, on evidence from a fourth former member of Lotta Continua, one Leonardo Marino. He said he had been the getaway driver. It emerged that, contrary to the impression initially given by the carabinieri, Marino had been a longtime contact before his arrest and confession. He was convicted and sentenced, but had his term in jail reduced in recognition of his status as a witness for the prosecution and, finally, quashed altogether. He spent just three months in detention.

The trial and appeal brought to light numerous contradictions and imprecisions in Marino's testimony: he said one of the other men he had accused, Giorgio Pietrostefani, was present when Sofri ordered the killing, yet Pietrostefani was able to prove he was elsewhere; Marino's version of how the murder was carried out was contradicted by the ballistic evidence; he said the getaway car was beige, when in fact it was blue; and his account of the escape route was at odds with contemporary testimony. Nevertheless Sofri, Pietrostefani and Ovidio Bompresi were each given 22-year sentences.

By late 1992, the case had reached Italy's highest tribunal, the Court of Cassation. In the meantime judges in Turin had thrown out another case arising from allegations by Marino on the grounds that he was not a credible witness. The members of the Court of Cassation felt the same, and overturned the convictions.

In most juridical systems, that would be that. But in Italy the fact that the country's most senior judges have pronounced in your favour does not necessarily mean you are in the clear. There had to be another trial.

The fourth trial was conducted in front of the nearest thing in Italian law to a jury. For certain cases, certain courts co-opt so-called people's judges. They sit alongside the professional judges wearing sashes in the red, green and white of the Italian flag, looking a bit self-conscious.

The people's judges can outvote the professionals six to two. But once sentence is passed it is left to one of the career judges to write up the reasons for the decision. This opens the way to an outrageous abuse known as the *sentenza suicida*: if the judge who is entrusted with writing up the reasons for a verdict disagrees with it, he can write in such a blatantly illogical way as to ensure it will be thrown out on appeal to the Court of Cassation. Just such a sentenza suicida was written to "explain" the verdict exonerating Sofri and the others. As a result, on October 27, 1994, the Court of Cassation — the very court which two years earlier had heaped ridicule on the men's conviction — handed down a new verdict overturning their acquittal.

All, however, was not lost. Under the tortuous Italian legal system, there had to be yet another trial; once again, in Milan; once again, held before a bench of professional and people's judges. The verdict was one of guilty. However, one of the people's judges was so perturbed by what had happened after they retired to consider their verdict that he sought legal advice — three times. Each time, Giovanni Settimo was told to forget what he claimed to have witnessed. He quoted one of the lawyers as saying: "Now you realise how justice works in Italy".

Settimo's disquiet, and determination, is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that he too had been politically active in the seventies — as a militant in the neo-fascist right.

According to Settimo, the people's judges in the latest Sofri trial had been mercilessly arm-twisted into a guilty verdict by the two professionals. He testified that, in order to get the people's judges to abandon a mitigating rider to their sentence, the presiding judge had pleaded, then cajoled, and finally tricked them: he had undertaken to make a plea for pardon in his sentence and done no such thing.

An investigation into the conduct of the presiding judge was launched. But only one other people's judge backed Settimo's version of events. The investigation was dropped.

By then, the case of Sofri and the others had wound its way back to the Court of Cassation which, on January 22 this year — in its third review of the case — endorsed a conviction. The judges reached their verdict just four months before the case would have lapsed under Italy's 25-year statute of limitations.

Within a week, all three men had been shut up in Pisa prison at the start of their 22-year sentences. Italy's head of state, President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, has ruled out clemency. So unless Sofri and his companions can get their cases reviewed — a process which can take years in Italy — or benefit from an all-embracing amnesty for the prisoners and exiles of the turbulent seventies, they are unlikely to emerge alive.

Academic sets her university a challenge

Libby Brooks meets a woman who is standing up to the male élite of Cambridge university

SEVEN hundred and eighty-nine years of learning has done little to prepare Cambridge university for Dr Gillian Evans. With terrier-like tenacity, the 52-year-old history and theology don has dragged the institution from High Court to tribunal in her single-handed assault on the university's allegedly discriminatory promotion procedures. "It's Kafka-esque and Whitehall farce in equal proportions," she giggles as she reflects on the latest episode of her offensive: last month Prince Philip, Chancellor of Cambridge university, intervened in the case, after Evans wrote to him outlining her demands for openness and equality of promotion.

"There is tremendous support, though not necessarily from those who are willing to put their heads above the parapet. I respect that and they know I'm fighting this for them as well as me. In the end, I must win. I may not get promoted myself, but these issues of fairness are so strong, they have to concede."

The joyously litigious Evans has lectured worldwide and published more than two dozen titles on medieval philosophy. She joined Cambridge's Sidney Sussex College in 1980. "When I first arrived, I stuck out like a sore thumb. Initially, the men were nice to me, but rather in the way you might be pleasant to a doll. After a while, when I was still there and obviously a serious colleague, there was a backlash of resentment."

Her academic credentials are redoubtable, yet Evans has consistently been denied promotion, remaining a lecturer while colleagues of similar calibre became readers and professors. Despite a 50-50 gender balance at undergraduate level, only 5.35 per cent of professors are female (compared with 7 per cent at Manchester, 8.6 per cent at Glasgow and 7.5 per cent at Durham).

Evans's determination to find out why she has been passed over has led to an embattled three years, as she has tried to force transparency upon that netherworld of quaint custom, cheerful élitism and passing the port.

In 1986 Evans was awarded a prestigious British Academy Readership, one of only six given each year. "By then, it was becoming very noticeable that I hadn't been promoted. There is a gentleman's agreement that a British Academy award results in a readership afterwards, but it didn't for me."

Eventually, in 1992, Evans was proposed for promotion by her faculty. "But because there's such an enormous queue, you need to be proposed two or three times in succession. I had one shot at it."

After initiating an internal grievance case, she was proposed and rejected in 1995 and again in 1996. The worm, she chuckles, turned. "I had to get the promotion procedures reformed. I could either let my career be wrecked or turn it round and get something good out of it that would be of use to someone else. I knew it would be a long battle — you're dealing with a powerful institution with centuries of power games and secrecy."

Last year, after debating her concerns at the university senate body and undertaking her own survey of procedures at other institutions, she was granted leave for judicial review by the High Court. The judge stayed the proceedings for a year to allow Cambridge to undertake its own review of selection procedures.

Meanwhile Evans also brought a test case for sex discrimination, which was ruled out of time last month; she is currently planning to appeal and to sue the university for breach of contract. "I'm attacking on all sides. It's like a big bear amongst a pack of dogs," she says with cheery relish. The university is currently considering introducing nominal professorships — similar to the titular professors created by Oxford university in response to similar concerns. It also now allows lecturers to nominate themselves for promotion, rather than relying upon colleagues of dubious allegiance, and requires feedback if a nomination is rejected.

"The truth about this sexism is that, in their conscious minds, like good, liberal-thinking academics, they would say of course we don't treat women differently," Evans says. "But I think it's difficult for men to accept that a woman is as good or possibly better than they are, and probably part of the reason they react to me with anger is that they feel a bit of disgust at themselves."

Rea, tea, bites

Flachra Gibbons talks rashers and republicanism with Ireland's finest actor

NOT MANY A-list actors invite hacks into their homes so they can nose through the medicine cabinet or make snide remarks about the soft furnishings. Fewer still would open the door if a journalist then turned up 45 minutes late. And only a rare bird indeed would bring you through to the kitchen and make you lunch. But then Stephen Rea is not your typical Hollywood A-list actor. He is a human being.

He is standing out in the drizzle like the oldest orphan in town as we pulled up to the door. Rea is perennially described as lugubrious, and he's glumly resigned to it. The tag mildly irritates him, though, as if he doesn't quite understand what people are on about. ("I'm not that serious, am I?" he asks me later and with great gravitas in the gloom of dusk.) But hangdog isn't the half of it — it's more like the whole kennel's been lynched.

"Grand day," he says bleakly as he shambles over to shake my hand and have a yarn with the taxi driver. His hands are stuck so deep in the pockets of his baggy cords they almost reach his knees. "Ah well," he sighs after a few seconds, "I suppose we'd better go inside." And off he skips — yes, *skips* — like Charlie Chaplin, leaving me rooted to the step. There's comic timing for you. Rea is full of little surprises.

Then comes the Irish tea ceremony. "Will you have something to eat? Just a wee cup in your hand?"

"Naw, I'm grand." As the visitor, it is incumbent upon me to refuse at least five times, even though I'm starving. As the host, it's incumbent upon him to keep offering until I give in. "Go on, go on," he says. "Och Jesus, you'll have something, man." I give in. Etiquette has been observed. Five thousand years of civilisation is safe for another afternoon.

"Will you have a rasher? I have eggs here as well . . ." The same ritual is acted out again over each. In the meantime I've done mortal damage to a Gubbeens cheese and he's making me more toast. Irish bread doesn't quite fit in the toaster — the loaves are too big, too irregular. "I like that about them," he says, "you have to cut the corners off."

Rea still has his corners, principles he quietly refuses to sacrifice, awkward bits of personal history he makes no attempt to hide or smooth away. Twenty-four years ago his wife Dolours was convicted of taking part in the Old Bailey bombing. He pauses over the kitchen sink and looks out to the garden as the ghost of the subject passes. "It was long ago, very different times. I'll talk about anything else . . ." And with a kind of reckless honesty you can only admire, he does.

We talk politics, which is as traditional as bribing prime ministers in these parts. Politics is considered polite conversation in Ireland, and, like the weather, it's always been hopeless. Except now suddenly it isn't — even that other famously glum Belfastman Van Morrison is saying the sun is gonna shine again.

And yet Rea is back playing another disillusioned IRA man — leaving himself open to ambush from every rubbishing rightwing rag — when he could be raking it in from feelgood froth in LA. The film is called A Further Gesture, and that is what it is for him, another low-pay job he believes might matter, might help explain things. You can see why he found it irresistible. The story starts almost where The Crying Game left off — IRA gunman kills a prison officer during mass breakout from the Maze and flees to New York, only to be drawn back to the bullet by some Guatemalan revolutionaries.

"I've always been interested in people willing to die for a cause, who live their life as a gesture rather than muddle through like the rest of us. This guy Dowd has seen enough. He is running on empty, which is a point a lot of people here have arrived at. I wanted to explore what happens when you die inside, when you turn into a killing machine, when the only redeeming thing is your own death." Again Rea is investing sympathy and subtlety in someone who seems beyond it.

Although the premise for the film was his own, the script is by Ronan Bennett, whose earlier, sharper thriller, Love Lies Bleeding, predicted the first IRA ceasefire.



Stephen Rea: 'I'd far rather be doing comedy' PHOTO: KATZ

"Everyone sees the IRA as only having inflicted pain, but that community also sees itself as being on the receiving end all the time. Now that there might just be a settlement there's an awful lot of sprained eyelashes about. You just can't write off that experience."

IT ALL goes quiet. It goes quiet a lot with Rea, but it's a relaxed, reflective quiet. "I'd far rather be doing comedy, you know." I laugh. He says it with such seriousness. "What's funny?" There's a long pause. "I know, my face never lifts. I'm a very serious person, you know."

We both laugh. He has this great, slow-motion smile. You can see why Beckett loved him. "Sam always wanted to get more jokes in. He liked nothing better than wringing humour from misery." Just like Rea.

He's just finished another indie comedy in Hollywood, where he plays a washed-up TV writer alongside Tom Arnold. "I could do comedies till the cows come home," he says morosely. "I don't know why I don't do more of them."

Hacks is the third film in which he has played an American this year. "I'm heartily sick of the sound of my own voice. I really am. It's funny, for years I'd only take parts if I could do them in my own accent, and now I'll play anything as long as it is not an Irishman."

More tea and more Club biscuits. I hadn't had one in years. "Here," he says, "take a heap of them back with you." I refuse. He insists.

However much he protests about hating playing Irish, Rea would play a potato for Neil Jordan. The old partnership that has lasted through Angel, Company Of Wolves, The Crying Game, Interview With A Vampire and Michael Collins will give us The Butcher Boy early next year, Jordan's long-awaited adaptation of Patrick McCabe's peat-black tale of a mad little boy who turns a small town upside-down. Their stars have risen together, and they are still rising.

Next year is going to be another of Rea's very big years. He's virtually horizontal in his big armchair at the prospect of it. It is hard to imagine how someone so laid back can be so dynamic, easy to forget that the man laid out before me is, arguably, the greatest stage actor of his generation. He is responsible for carving out a whole new canon of modern Irish plays with Field Day, the company he founded with Brian Friel.

The early eighties were arid years in Ireland. The long war of attrition in the North reached its nadir with the hunger strikes, while emigration bled the South of a whole generation of young people sacrificed on the altar of economic austerity. Field Day was like a sunny day in December. I remember seeing Translations in a school hall with a cast of "unknowns" that included Rea, Liam Neeson, Ray McAnally and Mick Lally. A room full of farmers in Eskimo anoraks and flat caps was blown away by the greatest play ever written about linguistics and the colonisation of the mind. It was about our minds and our language and we were seeing it first — us, the great unwashed; us, with shit still on our shoes.

Field Day was a theatre of ideas as well as a true people's theatre. It took a hard look at Irishness and found it narrow and cirrhotic. We wouldn't be enjoying a ceasefire now if it weren't for those tours of school halls and community centres.

After a few years in abeyance, he's getting Field Day back on the road, making a documentary with Friel about the 1798 rising, the brief flowering of Ireland's Presbyterian Enlightenment when the shroud of sectarianism lifted for a second and the Empire shook.

Rea has just turned 50 ("Ah Jesus, do you have to mention that?") though he looks late 30s. Fame hasn't changed him. He's still the son of a Belfast bus driver, still a socialist, still painfully modest. To some, though, his unashamed nationalism — I can hear his teeth grind — means he will always be that wolf in sheep's clothing.

"I know, looking at where I live now, some might say I have sold out. Well, maybe I have." I doubt it. No surrender is burnt into his soul as surely as it is into Ian Paisley's.

Premium Bond

CINEMA
Richard Williams

THE first face we see in the new James Bond film is black. But he's not a Jamaican beggar, a Harlem gangster or a Haitian voodoo dancer, which was how Ian Fleming seemed to see black people. He's a British intelligence officer, and he's giving his assessment, in crisp RP, of live pictures from a surveillance operation on the Russian border. So, some things do change.

Others don't. Much later in Tomorrow Never Dies, a film humming with cyberworld technology, M receives an urgent message from 007. He's in the South China Sea, with only minutes left to save the world. So what does the head of the Secret Service do? She jumps into her Daimler and pops round to the Admiralty to pass on the news.

James Bond's appeal goes beyond the stunts, the girls, the branded goods. Almost 45 years after his debut in the first of Fleming's books, the hero exists today to remind us of a very different Britain. The brief appearance in an early sequence of Bond's old Aston Martin shows that the makers of Tomorrow Never Dies are alert to that special property, and to the weight that Pierce Brosnan must carry, doomed to endless comparison not only with his predecessors in two media — the Bond of the books, and the four men who played variations on the part in earlier films — but to numberless individual imaginings.

In his second appearance in the role, Brosnan demonstrates that his synthesis of all these incarnations is probably hard to beat. He may walk across the gun barrel of the traditional title sequence like a male model, but beneath the bland good looks he is certainly better at conveying a sense of depth than Timothy Dalton, who tried to humanise Bond but ended up fatally weakening him.

Directing the 18th film in the series begun by Albert Broccoli and Harry Saltzman, Roger Spottiswoode sticks to the accepted formula, beginning with a pre-title sequence which is probably the finest example of its type since Sean Connery slipped out of his wetsuit to reveal a white tuxedo.

With the preliminaries out of the way, the director immediately mounts another expensive set-piece, the mysterious sinking of a British warship off the Chinese coast, giving a clear indication of Spottiswoode's chief ambition, which is to match the non-stop energy of movies by such action specialists as John Woo and Wolfgang Petersen.

A concentration on the usual set-pieces — the parachute jump, the underwater sequence, the climactic explosion in the villain's hi-tech lair — is predictable, but there is enough imagination to sustain interest.

Some of the human elements are less convincing, although it was a smart idea to make the latest baddie the boss of a global media empire, equal parts Murdoch and Maxwell. "There's no news like bad news!" Elliot Carver cries, before outlining his ambition to acquire exclusive broadcasting rights in China on a 100-year contract. Sadly, Jonathan Pryce has little to add to the long history of distinguished Bond villains, unable to find characteristics to match the purring menace of the various Blofelds (Pleasence, Savalas, Charles Gray), the elegant *weltschmerz* of Michel Lonsdale or the gleeful paranoia of Klaus-Maria Brandauer.

"You really are quite insane," Bond tells Carver, but in truth he's not as interesting as that. Still, 007's relationship with the glamorous Mrs Carver (Teri Hatcher) might have Rupert looking at Anna a bit thoughtfully. "I want you to pump her for information," M tells Bond, prefacing the scene that comes closest to justifying Brosnan's optimistic description of the movie as "dark — a bit like film noir".

Judi Dench continues to grow into the role of Bond's boss. "Sometimes I don't think you have the balls for this job, M," an admiral snorts, and it would be a shame to spoil things by repeating her sulphurous response. Otherwise feminism gets a mixed showing, an uncertainty embodied in the appearance of Michelle Yeoh, the star of Hong Kong martial arts movies, as a Chinese agent who reluctantly teams up with Bond. "I work alone," she tells him. But two minutes later, after a fight sequence of Woo-like brilliance, he is returning to rescue her from disaster.

There's some rather acid fun at the expense of the media, but Bruce Feirstein, the screenwriter, may have missed the real point about media moguls, as embodied in last week's story about how Murdoch's organisation paid tax at a rate of 7.8 per cent of its global earnings last year, against its rivals' contribution to the public purse of around 30 per cent. Now that's what I call international terrorism. But, like stealing from pension funds, it probably wouldn't make such an entertaining movie.

Straight to the bottom of the glass

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

AT MOMENTS of high revelry — funerals and such — Terry Wogan is apt to shout, "Give the woman in the bed more porter!" Herein you see the early success of Guinness, a vague sense that it's good for you and can, at a pinch, raise the dead. Elizabeth Barrett, who as it happens was a woman in a bed, had to drink a nourishing pint of stout a day on doctor's orders, despite her pallid protestations. That's why she ran away with Browning.

The only person to be seen drinking Guinness in The Guinnessty (BBC2) was Desmond, the desolate, adopted, Mexican son of the late Oonagh Guinness. He is the odd Guinness out, the poor one. "I've been told not to drink. My doctor said, 'I give you two years'." And he took a swig of the glass that is good for you, tall and black and white-collared as a Presbyterian preacher.

Several Guinnesses have gone to hell in a handcart, chiefly because they seem to have no brakes. You never saw such a charming, confiding, Celtic crew. If you put the lot of them in a room with a sharpened pencil, not one could spell discretion. ("Oops!" said Lord Moyne, finding a picture of Hitler in the family album.)

Maureen, Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, is 90. Sometimes she wore a floating négligé, sometimes a black hood of imprecise purpose, and always an air of charming daffiness. Though she was born into the beerage, she is not strictly peerage, having been married twice since the marquess died. But, as she said, he was by far her favourite husband.

He was killed in Burma while on a secret mission. "The idea was that, when he found someone suitable, he would take him up a tree and broadcast to the Japs saying, 'Your emperor wants you all to return to Tokyo!'" This cunning plan was not a success. They shot him.

Her son died of Aids, a daughter was an alcoholic, and her last child, all too aptly called Perdita, is lost to her. "She won't fly, so she never comes to England. She's terribly sweet and sends me a lovely pot of caviar from Harrods now and then." Perdita lives in Ireland. Maureen lives 200 yards from Harrods.

The background to this family saga was the beautiful, melancholy landscape of their Irish estates. In family snaps small children, who would later make a big splash, paddled in their knickers in private lakes.

When Ernest Saunders was made chief executive, he said, "I'd never seen so many aristocrats in my life round a table. There were marquesses and earls and lords, and they didn't have much idea what was going on." This is Saunders's first interview since his providential recovery from Alzheimer's, and he's looking quite chipper. Perhaps Guinness is good for you.

Lester Piggott has a speech impediment, possibly a cleft palate, which no one in Secret Lives: Lester Piggott (Channel 4) could resist mimicking. He is partially deaf and his feelings don't show in his starvation-carved face. It has the immobility of Buster Keaton, who, as a child, was thrown around the stage in his father's act until he learned to take pain without showing it. Lester had a father like that.

Willie Carson called this isolation Lester's ring of steel. Fortunately for us, Willie is a vivid talker, and he talked us through Lester. We heard the scream of Willie's stirrup along the rail as Lester cut him up . . . saw white flakes of paint showering off it like acetylene sparks . . . and read Lester's mind: "And your man says, 'You're not going up there. No, you're not going up there.'"

Willie said, "He is very bizarre. But there you are." It is a poem.

Piggott offered to appear himself for — the commentary said — a small fortune. Everyone said he was avaricious, though often in small, cheap, teasing ways. When in jail for tax evasion, according to a fellow prisoner, he even cheated at cards, and I'd say that takes nerve.

Vertical Memory, one of Yoko Ono's stronger works on show at Oxford's Museum of Modern Art

Above us only sky

ART
Rachel Withers

IMAGINE there were no artists; it's easy if you try. On the face of it, dispensing with the myth of the great artist has definite advantages. That tiresome élite of lonely, misunderstood and often pain-in-the-arse geniuses would be dispatched on the spot. There would be no more Turner Prize (hooray, I hear you cry). And (casting a jaundiced eye in the direction of the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford) it might mean fewer of those solo retrospectives that extract artists' work from its wider context in order to stamp it with the hallmark of individual brilliance.

The elimination of the category "artist" has been a favourite activity for many 20th century avant-gardes. Their preferred method for doing this has often been the promotion of banal, everyday activities and objects to the status of art. Fluxus, a radical and international group of artists, musicians and thinkers founded in the early 1960s, followed in just this tradition.

Fluxus advocated an artless art that could be produced by anyone, provided he or she was prepared to take the principle of artlessness (at some level) seriously. Its exhibitions often featured distinctly Pythonesque activities such as peeing into a pot while singing the national anthem. Mixed up with all this was John Cage, composer of that notorious four minutes and 33 seconds' worth of pianistic silence.

Moma Oxford is now staging a retrospective of the work of Yoko Ono: Have You Seen The Horizon Lately? (until March 15). It is against the background of Cage and Fluxus that Ono's pieces really need to be viewed.

Ono herself was extensively involved with the group in the sixties, and the Fluxian idea of a kind of egalitarian artistic "deskilling" underlies all the work in the Moma show, from early pieces such as the 1961 painting To Hammer A Nail (a wall panel covered in nails, with attached hammer) to the last exhibit, which invites you to relocate large pebbles at specific locations according to your mood.

The Moma enterprise contradicts this whole principle. Out of an aesthetic that strives to question the art star-making apparatus, Ono the art star is selected, isolated and lionised. Ono doesn't really make any capital out of the contradiction: this is work that doesn't encompass sharp irony or barbed wit. She was eventually excommunicated from Fluxus for her "individualism" — which is ironic, given the blandness of much of her work next to that of many other Fluxus artists.

Perhaps surprisingly for a personality so often invoked in relation to the supposed "sexual revolution", Ono's work lacks any element of full-blown sexuality. With some notable exceptions, its sensibility seems relentlessly pure and incorruptible.

Her 1966 Film No 4 is a 90-minute picture featuring 365 identically framed nude bottoms. She once described it — with, as far as one can tell, no comic intent at all — as a demonstration that "the bottom is beautiful. It has great expression. It should not be less exposed than any other part of the body." Possibly, this absence of salacity has to do with Ono's attachment to Zen Buddhist ideas. Maybe it is characteristic of the particular mindset of a sixties' hippie. But I find myself wondering whether there isn't an element of terror about dangerous, unstable adult desires lurking beneath this purism.

This hypothesis gets some support from what are probably the strongest works in the show: Cut Piece (1964) and Vertical Memory (1997). The former was a performance, in which Ono, kneeling silently on stage, invited members of the audience to cut her clothes from her body. The photographs of this event exude a truly scary ambivalence between humiliation and masochistic pleasure. The latter is made up of identical photos of Ono's anamorphically stretched face, paired with short texts. The texts begin as a series of anecdotes about male abuse, but turn into a cautionary tale about the dangers of "taking it lying down".

These works hint that under the great mound of apparently benign hippie clutter there might be a tougher and more questioning artistic intelligence trying to fight its way out. Let's hope it surfaces soon.

Man with a mission

THEATRE
Michael Billington

MATTHEW WARCHUS'S fast-moving, three-hour production of Hamlet gained fame in Stratford for its elimination of Fortinbras, Norway and the military-political background. It has now moved to London's Barbican.

Dubious in theory, Warchus's production is irresistible in practice. It moves like lightning. It dispenses with cliché: no fog-strewn battlements, clanking Ghost or cardboard Claudius establishing moral turpitude by chewing grapes. And it boasts a compelling Hamlet in Alex Jennings, who becomes a fiercely angry moral absolutist in a society rank with hypocrisy.

This is the key. We first see Hamlet solemnly emptying the ashes from his father's urn against filmic memories of an idyllic childhood. But he then finds himself trapped in a world of pretence in which Claudius prays to the candle-decked statue of Christus Rex and is shriven by the court priest while pursuing a policy of brutal pragmatism. It is the gulf between appearance and reality, as much as his father's murder, that drives this Hamlet to putative suicide and downright murder.

Jennings pursues this idea with riveting emotional logic. His Hamlet is no introspective weakling but a witty, quick-brained truth-seeker who takes Polaroid snaps of the snogging king. He charges round Elsinore clutching a handgun: he is both a man with a mission and, in his feigned madness, pistol-packing mummer. But Jennings's great virtue is that he lets you see, under the moral rage, the Hamlet that might have been: he gives constant signs of a spiritual grace outlawed by the merciless times.

This is a fresh, alive, stimulating Hamlet, and there is strong support from Derbhle Crotty as a fraught Ophelia, Susannah York as a silkily guilt-ridden Gertrude and Paul Jesson as a quibbling Gravedigger. No quibbles from me, however, about a radical, revisionist production far removed from the dreary pieties of set-text Shakespeare.

Two of Shakespeare's plays pose a problem for a modern audience: The Taming Of The Shrew and The Merchant Of Venice. But Gregory Doran, in his bright, confident new Stratford production of the latter, circumvents the play's presumed anti-Semitism by presenting Shylock as an authentic tragic hero and by highlighting the barbaric insensitivity of the Christians.

Visually, the production is pretty orthodox: Doran and his designer, Robert Jones, establish a familiar contrast between a dark, fogbound, faintly Goldoniesque Venice and a light, airy, timeless Belmont. The most unusual touch, actually harking back to Henry Irving, is to show Shylock caught up in a street carnival and rushing back to his empty, daughterless house where he proceeds to beat his head against the walls.

In fact, it is Philip Voss's Shylock that dominates this production and, following on his Malvolio, places him in the front rank of Shakespearean actors. In his opening scene with Antonio he brilliantly establishes the double face of the ghettoised outsider: his lodged hate is camouflaged by a flickering charm that allows his hands, even as he proposes the bond, to roam menacingly over the merchant's vital organs.

Voss also pins down the crucial turning point in the action as decisively as Olivier: as he hears of Antonio's later misfortunes, he suddenly pauses on the phrase "Let him look to his bond" as if he only now grasps the extent of his power. An improvised joke has turned into a lethal weapon.

Given a Shylock of such weight, the Christians inevitably look a pretty dubious lot. But Doran does everything to emphasise their monstrosity. They manhandle Shylock in the street, spit on Tubal's beard and in the court behave like noisy Yahoos.

For once, Portia herself is also seen unsentimentally. Helen Schlesinger plays her as a woman so cocooned in wealth she cannot easily imagine why Shylock can't be bought off. Admittedly the play's element of fairytale romance goes for a burton, but that is a small price to pay for the realisation that the play pits a member of a persecuted race against a group of privileged bigots.

The cult of the cut

Joanna Briscoe

Venus Envy: A History
of Cosmetic Surgery
by Elizabeth Haiken
The Johns Hopkins University Press
370pp £20.50

COSMETIC surgery is at once a dirty little secret and a freak show for the masses. The province of celebrities at one extreme and housewives at the other, it is a standard subject of both feminist debate and Woman's Own. Whether viewed as a voyeuristically enthralling novelty or an accepted contemporary practice, cosmetic surgery has become a source of universal fascination, and as the interface between medicine and art, death and immortality, extreme vanity and crippling insecurity, it has all the elements of classic drama.

At a time in which body mutation by scalpel and laser is becoming increasingly acceptable (an American survey showed that within a 10-year period, the number of people who approve of plastic surgery increased by 50 per cent), an investigation into the cultural and historical context of this phenomenon is overdue.

While Naomi Wolf in The Beauty Myth examined cosmetic surgery as the most extreme manifestation of an industry founded on the construction and maintenance of female insecurity, and Susan Faludi addresses this aspect in Backlash, Elizabeth Haiken focuses solely on the subject of cosmetic (ie, aesthetic rather than reconstructive) surgery in a work that is both a superbly researched medical history and an overview of its social context.

A nose job, requiring plant leaf, scarified nose tip and perfect sutures, was described in 600 BC. Of course it would be. This is a history. But for any useful starting point, we fast forward to the first world war, when the facial wounds of soldiers were so horrific, an army dentist admitted, "No one knew what to do with them". Modern plastic surgery, if not born during the war, was weaned on it, the results considered miracles of reconstruction.

Though Haiken shows that in its early days cosmetic surgery was a specifically American phenomenon, and clearly this emphasis continues, Venus Envy's dominant failing is its ethnocentric viewpoint. The author cuts no corners, and her focus is not one of expediency so much as narrow vision. Even in the chapter on cosmetic surgery's disturbing role in eradicating racial characteristics, the author largely confines her study to the United States, whereas far more emphasis could be placed on Asia, Brazil, Mexico or France, for example. But then an American cultural study would not be an American cultural study if it did not demonstrate its own characteristic insularity.

After the war there was a glut of newly experienced plastic surgeons knocking about with no one to cut, peel and stretch. "The time seems auspicious," noted surgeon Seymour Oppenheimer, ". . . for all cosmetic surgery, and cosmetic rhinoplasty in particular, to be elevated to its proper dignity in the profession, to be popularised and made available for the large number of individuals in civil life who could be benefited in mind no less than in feature." This meant women. A man requiring a facelift was described by an LA surgeon as "either an aging actor, a homosexual, or both".

The sudden switch from an entirely male patient pool to an almost exclusively, and newly created, female one; from reconstructive surgery's link with economic status to aesthetic surgery's putative role in the marriage market, is seamlessly demonstrated by Haiken. The effort in regulation and public relations combined with a growing emphasis on standard female beauty; the converging tides of medicine and culture; and the promotion, for the first time, of wrinkles as a disease and large noses as deformities, all came galloping together in the triumphant creation of the cosmetic surgery industry as we know it today.

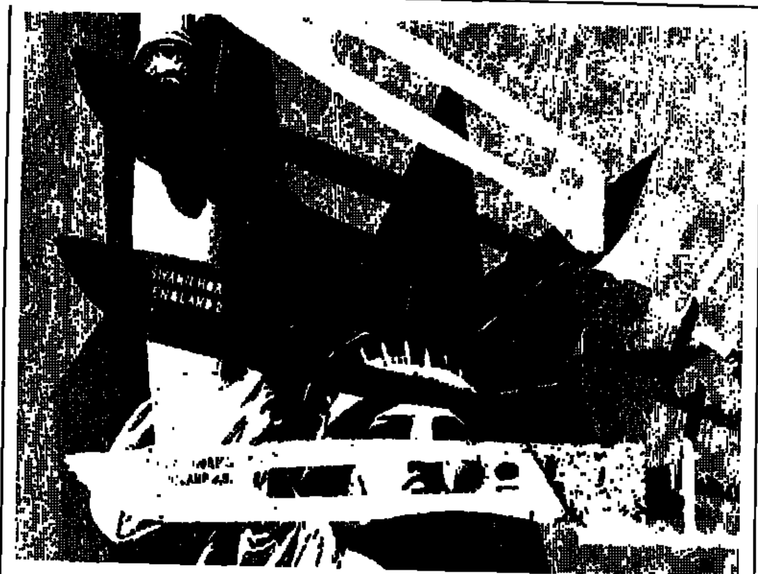


ILLUSTRATION: LIZ COULDWELL

Haiken is at her strongest when she merges medical history with its social and political background, making for an academic study that is intensely readable. As the New York Times warned in 1929, "almost any beauty doctor can skin you". There follows a history of the homogenisation of appearance involving quacks, showmen performing facelifts for the press in hotels, silicone causing gangrene, disastrous experiments with injected paraffin — "the too-familiar sequence of the introduction of a treatment, its avid acceptance without sufficient testing, and its disastrous sequelae for many patients", as surgeon Robert M Goldwyn observed, a pattern that continues in an industry that is still far from fully regulated today.

THE MIDDLE years of the century show surgeons and authorities floundering in the still vague and murky territory between medicine and the beauty industry, wrestling with morals while seeking justification for the "medicalization of non-medical conditions" that clearly defied the Hippocratic Oath. Americans traditions of self-improvement and democracy could be manipulated to embrace the beauty culture, then standardised by movie stars, while, according to Haiken, Alfred Adler's theory of the inferiority complex gave cosmetic surgery the mighty leg-up it was looking for. Her emphasis on this link is overheated, though surgery's transformation from vanity practice to "psychiatry with a scalpel" is compellingly argued. Surgery was even tried on prisoners to test psychological theories.

But despite occasional excitable flights of subjectivity, Haiken is not given to tub-thumping, nor to the impassioned diatribes of Naomi Wolf. She casts a cold eye over her subject. While a feminist view is clearly but subtly present, her subject itself is so inherently sensational that her beautifully cool language convinces through restraint.

Cosmetic surgery is now America's fastest growing medical speciality, and Haiken assumes a knowledge of the procedures of which she writes. Not for this study scalpel wielding's populist embellishments: splashings of gore, personal narrative, or celebrity guessing games.

Venus Envy is a flawed masterpiece that can be read as a discussion of the preoccupations of 20th century America itself. The social, political and cultural contexts in which an extreme, fascinating and bizarre practice has occurred have been analysed in great depth.

Aitken impaled on the sword of truth

Gerald Kaufman

The Liar: The Fall of Jonathan Aitken
By Luke Harding, David Leigh and David Pallister
Penguin 205pp £6.99

ONE evening last June I was chatting with George Carman, an acquaintance from Oxford undergraduate days, at a party given by Conrad Black, proprietor of the Daily Telegraph. Carman, Britain's most celebrated libel lawyer, was leading the defence against a libel suit brought by Jonathan Aitken, former Tory MP and minister.

Reports of the trial seemed to indicate that the defendants, the Guardian and Granada TV, were not doing so well. One part of the allegations against Aitken had collapsed. Mr Justice Popplewell — hearing the case without a jury — appeared inclined towards the plaintiff.

I asked Carman how things were going. He replied, elliptically, that some material had come to hand which might be helpful. Carman seemed calm, almost detached. Yet, as emerges from this account by Guardian journalists of the trial and the events that led up to it, he must have been seething with suppressed excitement. For the material to which Carman referred was dynamite, which within a couple of days led to Aitken abandoning his action with costs of £2 million.

As in other recent hazardous libel actions, the Guardian's decision to tough it out had been vindicated. Aitken himself had told a former "professional dominatrix specialising in bondage and chastisement", who recalled having been involved in "beating parties" with Jonathan, that he intended to "tough it out". He nearly got away with it. James Price QC, a member of Carman's defence team, commented almost admiringly, "I don't expect to see a better liar in my career."

Although Aitken never denied lucrative links with the Saudi royal family which provided him with a paid post and a buckshee Jaguar, the most that could be proved against him was that he had not declared these interests with sufficient frankness in the parliamentary register: an infringement of Commons rules, but in no way a criminal offence.

As for the claims by the Guardian and Granada's World In Action programme that Aitken had sought to procure prostitutes for Saudi princelings, it was not certain that Popplewell could be convinced against the plaintiff's bravura denials and his parading of an apparently copybook family life.

To me, as I encountered him in Commons corridors, the member for Thanet South seemed to be the epitome of a Tory MP of a certain pin-striped sort. Before this year's election, in which he lost his safe seat, there seemed no reason why, after having won his libel action, he should not eventually resume his late-flowering ministerial career.

Enter, however, Mohammed Al Fayed, proprietor of the Paris Ritz Hotel. He tipped off the Guardian's editor, Peter Preston, about a stay by Aitken at the Ritz. Preston obtained the hotel bill, and began a correspondence with Aitken to find out who had paid it. His benefactors had, in fact, been the Saudis,

Aitken, as a minister, could not afford to have it proved that he had accepted such a favour. It was his increasingly convoluted efforts to obfuscate the payment of this bill that led him to weave a fabric of lies, involving his wife and one of his twin daughters, that led to his downfall.

No Forsyth or Clancy thriller can compete with the excitement of the chapters in this book which recount the delving into Swiss hotel bills, car-hire coupons and airline ticket counterfoils which proved that Aitken's wife, Lolicia, had never been in Paris during the weekend in question and therefore could not have paid his bill, as he had claimed. Like his hero, Richard Nixon, Aitken was destroyed not by a crime but by a cover-up.

This brisk book is marred by only two faults. The first is that the authors lapse too often from journalism into journalese. The second shortcoming is more serious. Peter Preston obtained Aitken's Ritz bill by means of what the authors call a "cod fax" on House of Commons notepaper. The Sunday Telegraph is quoted with some scorn as having called it a forgery; but a forgery is exactly what it was. Events justified Preston's forgery. So why employ a cosmetic euphemism to disguise the somewhat grubby truth?

Illuminating though this book is, it fails to uncover two mysteries. The first is why Aitken made that sojourn at the Paris Ritz. The second is the subject of the 20-minute phone conversation he conducted from his hotel room with his parliamentary pair, that campaigner for truth and justice, Diane Abbott MP.

Gerald Kaufman is Labour MP for Manchester Gorton.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
December 21 1997

Paperbacks

Desmond Christy

History of My Life, by Giacomo Casanova, trs Willard R Trask (Johns Hopkins University Press, six vols, £11 each)

CASANOVA'S manuscript very nearly perished in the second world war when a bomb hit the premises of the publisher Brockhaus in Leipzig. It was only in 1960 that Brockhaus announced that this extraordinary memoir was for the first time to be published as Casanova wrote it. Previous editions had all been abbreviations or adaptations. Who could read these pages without thinking that they had led a very dull life? Forget the women for a minute — not that Casanova can — and consider our hero's other lives, as a collaborator with Da Ponte on the libretto of Don Giovanni, a translator of the Iliad, as a preacher, gambler, violinist, lottery director, alchemist and spy. We follow him from his youth in Padua, to Venice, Naples, Rome, Corfu, Lyon, Paris, St Petersburg . . . to anywhere where he can make, spend or gamble what he earns and from whose authorities he is often forced to flee.

He was bound, sooner or later, to be imprisoned, but the Doges's prison could not hold him for long and provides him with one of his greatest yarns.

A Guide to the Architecture of London, by Edward Jones and Christopher Woodward (Phoenix Illustrated, £14.99)

THIS is a very attractive book — pictures, maps, comments on individual buildings, short essays on districts of the metropolis. It has also been "revised and updated for the London of the 1990s . . ." Er, well sort of. The British Library "will not be established in its new premises on Euston Road until 1993". Time the authors and publishers caught up. Did you know that Hitler took a shine to Whiteleys' department store in Queensway? Had he invaded England, he wished to make it his HQ. Just the place from which to rule a nation of shopkeepers.

The Medicine of ER, by Alan Duncan Ross and Harlan Gibbs MD (Flamingo, £7.99)

WOULD you be safe in the hands of the doctors on television's most riveting hospital drama? Just lie back and be grateful that it is not your chest they are cutting open. You don't have to be a hypochondriac to find this gripping — it will grip you in the chest, the heart and gut. Next time you hear the TV docs shout "Saline, D5W" you will know exactly what they mean. There are lots of doctorly jokes: "Sign in a hospital lab: Be nice to bacteria. It's the only culture some people have."

Read My Lips, by Matthew Parris and Phil Mason (Penguin, £6.99)

SOME happy hours can be spent with this anthology of "things politicians wish they hadn't said". The Americans are my favourites. George Bush certainly has a way with words: "I stand for anti-bigotry, anti-Semitism, and anti-racism." Dan Quayle has a way with metaphors: "There's a lot of unchartered water in space." And what did the Americans call their airborne invasion of Grenada? "A pre-dawn vertical insertion." Ouch.

The black man's burden

Ronald Segal

The Slave Trade
by Hugh Thomas
Macmillan 928pp £25

THE Atlantic trade, which lasted from 1440 to 1870, landed some 11 million black Africans as slaves in the Americas and cost the lives of at least as many others in their procurement, storage and transport. Hugh Thomas has written an important book on the subject, and the maps he has included are invaluable. The story of how greed overwhelmed initial qualms about this despicable business is told in meticulous detail. The very exhaustiveness of the account risks buckling interest, but there is ore to be found in virtually every lode. Among the shareholders in Britain's slave-trading South Sea Company, for instance, were Swift, Defoe and Sir Isaac Newton. And when that speculative bubble of greed finally burst, Newton lost £20,000, so that he could never again bear to hear the very words "South Sea".

The horrors of the trade are here in all their cumulative rebuke to so-called Western civilisation. Only the subsequent story of the abolitionist movement provides relief. In this part of the book, Thomas is passionately engaged. The prose rises to its feet and races. The account of parliamentary debates and diplomatic pressures as Britain moved to withdraw from the trade and then pressed other countries to do likewise has a dramatic dimension that lifts scholarship into literature.

Yet the book has serious defects. Thomas is right to suggest that cruel or callous rulers and merchants in black Africa were accomplices in the trade. He makes the point that slavery in the Western sense was ubiquitous in black Africa. It is true that over there "big men" competed for power and prestige by attracting followers who were the symbol and substance of wealth and provided yet more wealth through their production and procreation. But Thomas is wrong to imply that this was a form of slavery. These people were dependants, not slaves. They were not chattels or commodities.

The Atlantic trade disrupted this system by offering goods that were not indigenously produced. The "big men" could leapfrog their way to wealth and authority by access to these goods. The catch was that the suppliers required in return not other goods, but people. The assumption that the Atlantic trade did not deform traditional African society but only redirected existing institutions was used to mitigate, even deny, Western responsibility for its functioning and effects.

The book is coy about the connection between the trade and the development of industrial capitalism. The thesis of Eric Williams, that the trade provided the capital for the industrial revolution, is somewhat patronisingly dismissed. Williams may have oversimplified, but the evidence which Thomas himself supplies only confirms the connection. For what, but the Atlantic trade, so boosted the shipbuilding of Liverpool, the glassware of Bristol and the metalwork of Birmingham?

The book makes sparse reference to what became the standard measure in the trade: a male slave in the prime of age and health defined as a "piece of Indies", while women, children and the elderly were varying parts of a piece. Yet this was the essential arithmetic of developing capitalism, which reduced the person to a unit of productive capacity, with all the indifference to individual suffering that this allowed in the ledgers of the trade.

It is the significance of economic factors that Thomas slights even in his otherwise excellent treatment of the abolitionist movement. He is right to recognise this as crucially a moral crusade, informed by the very insistence on the humanity of slaves. Yet Thomas Clarkson himself, the pre-eminent figure in that crusade, argued in 1787 that an end to the trade would encourage cheap markets for the raw materials needed by industry and open new opportunities for British goods. Her industrial supremacy recommended a regime of free trade and free labour, in which her competitors would be at a relative disadvantage. Clarkson was invoking an interest that informed an increasingly influential lobby of industrialists.

Regrettably, Thomas does not deal with the lasting legacy of the Atlantic trade, a formulated racism that served to excuse it. In the moral exhaustion that followed the end of slavery itself, that racism acquired new vigour, in the former slave societies of the Americas and in the European empires where it assumed a very righteousness as the white man's burden. Much of 20th century history can scarcely be understood without taking that legacy into account.

If you would like to order this book at the special price of £20 contact CultureShop (see below)

Who'll take the rap?

Burhan Wazir

Fight the Power:
Rap, Race and Reality
by Chuck D, with Yusuf Jah
Payback Press 288pp £12.99

POP culture once had a meaning, an engaging substance. It came out of the forsaken ghettos and it was called Public Enemy — the American rap group to whom a generation of disillusioned African-American teenagers in the late 1980s looked for guidance in the face of imminent urban apocalypse.

In the seen-it, done-it apathy of the present, it is easy to forget just how appalling the arrival of Public Enemy was to Ronald Reagan's puritanical America. Quoting Malcolm X, clad in military khakis and flanked by the bow-tied Islamic virtue of Louis Farrakhan's fearsome Nation of Islam, lead rapper Chuck D declared that "Elvis was a hero to most, he never meant shit to me". Not since John Lennon dissed Jesus had a pop group prompted such fear in public consciousness.

But issue-orientated music succeeds only as long as the issues are aired by the fashionable, and Public Enemy are no longer fashionable. Always a lone voice of reason, Chuck D has found his old enemy, Reagan, reduced to Parkinsonian dilapidation. And what becomes of a boxer left standing alone in the ring, his fist primed with fury, as his aggressor is hauled off before the fight's end, gasping for breath? He'd never admit it, but with the election of Bill Clinton in 1992, Chuck D lost much of the reason for his resonance.

This hiatus underlies D's Fight The Power: Rap, Race And Reality. More academic treatise than autobiography, Chuck D's memoirs read like a Public Enemy album without the panic. This may be the most important book written on rap in general and Public Enemy in particular, but (necessarily, perhaps, as a book) it lacks that group's propensity for the sculpted rhythms, fire-cracker beats and industrial decorations that delivered such a sense of urban hysteria on albums such as It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back.



Chuck D . . . pose without power

Still, if Fight The Power sometimes sounds off like a university textbook, Chuck D's wrath is as visceral as ever. All the familiar targets are shot down: the media, politics, slavery, Hollywood, the music industry, black radio and black leadership. There are even some new ones, including rap itself ("through rap music the most negative projection of ourselves becomes the most popular for young people") and black athletes who are "pacified by what they're paid".

Rap, with its immoral and bloodthirsty language, rarely delivers much that is thoughtful. Here is a "provocative, candid and cogent assessment of black culture and culture at large" by an artist who has never lost the will to challenge. "I get up after having my ass kicked, therefore I get up to kick some ass," as he reasons at the end.

A jump behind the frogs

Alex Ivanovitch

You, Darkness
by Mayra Montero
Translated by Edith Grossman
Harvill 182pp £14.99

YOU, DARKNESS is an odd title for a book — an abrupt mixture of gravity and gaucheness. Mayra Montero is a Cuban novelist and so writes in Spanish, but the awkwardness of these words has nothing to do with a bad translator or the inability of one language to pin down another. If the title sounds stilted it's because, importantly, it is: the phrase is taken from a prayer addressed to the Virgin by one of the novel's characters, and when you read it as the beginning of a larger verse it makes perfect sense.

You, Darkness is set in Haiti, a country which seems to be dying slowly in all sorts of ways. The forests are receding, for example, there are fewer fish, pigs, ducks and iguanas around. And it's not just the local wildlife that's in decline — towns are emptying and a mountain that plays a large part in the story and which used to have seven caves now bizarrely has only five. Even the corpses which keep turning up suffer the same depredations as everything else on the island — all these bodies are missing something — a face, hands, feet, their skin: all that's left of one little girl are her fingers which are kept in a cardboard box by her father.

Both of our narrators (there are two) are much more interested in frogs than girls in boxes. Victor S Grigg is an American herpetologist who has been asked to go to Haiti and find the *grenouille du sang*, a rare species of frog that is almost extinct. He has been promised a two-year research fellowship if he can bring back a specimen to a famous colleague who, nicely enough, has leukaemia and so is on the verge of extinction himself. Grigg has long been puzzled by the fact that frog numbers all over the world are dwindling, and so he agrees to make the trip. The journey also gives him a chance to escape from a poisonous wife and a marriage on its last legs.

When he gets to Haiti he hires a native guide, Thierry Adrien, and the two men split the book's narrative duties between them. You, Darkness is what you might call a laminated book: the basic storytelling unit is made up of three parts; each character narrates a chapter, and this is followed by a fragment from a scientific journal which describes the disappearance of frog species in various countries. Every now and then Grigg's speech and Thierry's are put together within a single chapter and then they make up rapid, pointed sequences which are a bit like the stichomythic exchanges of Greek tragedy.

At the heart of the book are the pages in which the Haitian guide reminisces about his past life; they contain some of the book's best writing and could stand on their own. His tales of casual eroticism, family life and murder are told in sprawling, artful sentences seeded with commas, and his speech is likewise scattered with French Creole place and proper names. In just the same way Grigg's chapters are full of Latin and local names for amphibians, so that blue, purple and yellow frogs rub shoulders, so to speak, with Charlemagne Compere, Yoyotte Placide and the "pwazon rat" zombie-hunters.

Montero is a writer of some ability whose prose achieves real lyricism. The Haiti she has created in You, Darkness is an uneasy, memorable place in which macoute warlords fight for power, professional hunters corral the living dead on mountain tops "tying them in bunches, like iguanas", and local scientists consider the decline of the frog population as the harbinger of some unspecified and general collapse to come.

Realising our natural assets

Paul Evans

IT'S a wet December day and the streets are deserted. On the side of a building, two hanging baskets sway like signs in a ghost town, creaking in the wind; or perhaps more like a couple of severed heads, their lank hair serving as the withered, soggy reminders of once bright floral displays. Each year, throughout the country, thousands upon thousands of these hanging baskets festoon similar buildings in similar towns in an effort to attract tourists or brighten up the environment. For many places these floral displays mean much more — they are part of the annual nationwide competition, Britain in Bloom.

Run by the Tidy Britain Group, the campaign has been tarting up the grimy faces of Britain's towns and cities for a third of a century. The judges of the competition encourage the full range of Britain's horticultural passions, from the pizazz and swagger of public plantings to the quieter understatement of private cottage gardens. But it's the swinging, brightly coloured hanging baskets that have become the hallmark of Britain in Bloom. Many of Britain's towns are now luminescent with flowers, and even the average pub has so many hanging baskets you have to fight your way through flowers and foliage to get to the bar. Britain in Bloom's supporters claim this as proof of outstanding success.

Britain's high streets may look bloomin' marvellous in the summer but the picture in the countryside is far from rosy. The last 30 years have not been a success for wild plants. Apart from the well documented destruction of wild habitats, even village greens and commons, the sorts of places where local people once knew their local flora have lost their use and are now just little green lawns, obsessively tidy but ecologically impoverished.

So, two things are happening at once: the Britain in Bloom campaign has had great success in transforming the urban environment, but wild flowers are still being lost from the rural environment at a fair rate of knots. The two might not be directly related, but surely there's something wrong with our priorities here?

The high camp horticulture of the hanging basket may make a seasonal and spectacular splash of colour, but it doesn't go much deeper than that as far as nature is concerned. In fact, an industry which has relied traditionally on herbicides, pesticides, non-renewable forms of potting compost and profligate amounts of water can be seen as ecologically damaging. In effect, it is part of the problem rather than the solution.

Although the Britain in Bloom campaign has moved towards encouraging innovative ways of making horticulture more environmentally friendly and appreciating the beauty of wildflower displays, it is still obsessed with tidiness.

Britain in Bloom's organisers are terrified of the untidy. For them the weeds and scruffy areas in towns and cities are just unsightly magnets for litter — places waiting to be tidied up and prettified with planted flowers. What they want is a balance between nature and nurture that maintains what professor Graham Ashworth, director general of the Tidy Britain Group, calls an Arcadian Wonderland. In such a fantasy world there is no room for wild nature.

But it is precisely the scruffy corners of town — the patch of ground between railway lines, old abandoned gardens and mucky ponds — which hold the most hope for the future of wildlife in urban and urban fringe areas.

Leaving land free of obsessive intervention allows the spirit of wild nature to recolonise derelict land and produce dynamic habitats for plants and animals as well as informal environments for kids to play and older folks to wander in. Instead of the oppressive hand of the gardener we should learn to let go and allow nature to take over. Who knows, given the chance we may yet see a wild Britain in bloom.



ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

Chess Leonard Barden

NICELY timed to coincide with the launch of Fide's knock-out World Championship, Garry Kasparov has let it be known that he is ready to defend his own PCA title at the end of next year against the winner of a candidates tournament. Anticipating the possible outcome of the final Fide match in Lausanne next month, Kasparov gave the thumbs down to another series against his old rival Anatoly Karpov, who, he claims, is over the hill.

Karpov, aged 46, has won 150 tournaments during his career, but none in the course of this year. The Fide champion was in London earlier this month for the launch of his new Batsford-EuroDisney book for beginners, when journalists quizzed him about the apparent collapse of negotiations for a unifying title match.

Meanwhile Vishy Anand tied for first place with Vassily Ivanchuk at Belgrade, defeating (see last week's column) and finishing one point ahead of his great rival, Vlad Kramnik of Russia, who has withdrawn from the Fide championship in protest at Karpov's seeding to the final.

Anand, the Western alternative to an ex-Soviet trio, would be the number one contender but for lingering memories of his limp performance in his 1995 challenge to Kasparov. The Indian is rarely out of the top three in any tournament, and his fast, imaginative play is combined with a readiness to play for a win with either colour — all but one of his wins in Belgrade were with Black.

Ljubojevic v Anand

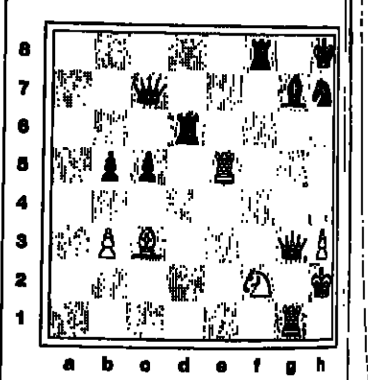
1 Nf3 d5 2 d4 Nf6 3 c4 dxc4 4 Qa4+ c6 Many players would prefer Nbd7 or Bd7, but Anand's simple strategy — developing Black's problem c8 bishop ready to exchange White's Catalan g2 bishop — is worth noting. **5 Qxc4 Bf5 6 g3 e6 7 Bg2 Nbd7 8 0-0 Be7 9 Rd1 0-0 10 Nh4?!** 10 Nc3 Ne4 is also harmless, so maybe 11 Bd2 (Ne4 12 Be1 or Nd5 12 Ne1) is the best try for a small edge.

Be4! 11 Bxe4 Nxe4 12 Qc2 Nef6 13 Nc3 c5 14 d5?! 14 dxc5 is best. **Nxd5 15 Nxd5 Bxh4 16 Nc3 Bf6 17 Qa4 Bd4!** This involves a pawn sacrifice, but Anand has seen deep.

18 e3 Bxc3 19 Rxd7 Qe8 20 Qd1 If 20 bxc3? Rd8 wins the rook. **Bf6 21 Rxb7 Qc6 22 Rb3 c4 23 Ra3 Rfd8 24 Qe2 Qe4** Now Black's army is nicely centralised, while the white rooks are falling off the edge of the board.

25 f3 Qd5 26 Kf2 Qb5 27 Rb1 Rd3 28 Qc2 Rad8 29 Ra4 Qf5 Threatens Rd2+ winning queen or the b1 rook; White defends this, and instead loses his other rook. **30 Rxc4 Qh3 31 Ke1 Rd1+ 32 Resigns.** If 32 Qxd1 Rxd1+ 33 Kxd1 Qf1+.

No 2503



A Borwell (Scotland) versus S Morozov (USSR), world postal semi-final 1984-89. "It took me several hours to find, and I nearly missed it," wrote White later about his next move, which prompted Black to resign. What was the winner that avoided several plausible traps?

No 2502: 1 e4 Nf6 2 Qe2 Nxe4 3 f3 Ng3 4 Qxe7+ Qxe7+ 5 Kf2 Nxh1 mate.

Quick crossword no. 397

Across

1 Soak (6)
4 Cheers! — or tips (anag) (6)
9 Puzzle or baffle (7)
10 Quiet little creature (5)
11 Scottish river (5)
12 Young flower — former Brownie! (7)
13 Where to see stars? (11)
18 British breed of animal (7)
20 Goods in ship etc (5)
22 Warning sound (5)
23 See 17
24 Make certain (6)
25 Mollusc — the world yours? (6)

Down

1 Portray (6)
2 Before time (5)
3 Educational or electoral body (7)
5 "Uncle" of Brer Rabbit etc (5)
6 Sleep (7)
7 Fashionable (6)
8 Given to overspending (11)
14 South-eastern Europe (7)
15 Without words being said (7)
16 Well and truly on fire (6)
17, 23 A question of life and death? (2,2,2,3,2,2)
19 Protest mildly (5)
21 Sleep like a bird (5)

Last week's solution

Bridge Zia Mahmood

JAGGY SHIVDASANI, the charismatic Indian bridge genius, was playing for his country in the World Championships in Tunisia. It's always a special pleasure to play against Jaggy, since his cavalier style is bound to create the kind of unpredictable positions that I love.

On this deal, though, I was an innocent bystander as Michael Rosenberg, my partner, came up with a truly fiendish piece of defensive bidding that I immediately christened the "Balmoral Coup" (Michael, for those of you who don't know, was born and brought up in Scotland before moving to the United States).

Take my cards as West and watch the drama from my point of view. This is your hand at favourable vulnerability:

♠J72 ♥K10842 ♦J1097 ♣K

Jaggy, on your right, opens with a conventional strong bid of one club (the Indian team all play the Precision system). You overcall one heart, and North passes. East, your partner, raises you to two hearts, but the opponents take over from here. South bids three clubs, North bids five clubs and South bids six clubs. Before I continue, what opening lead would you make?

There's a case for a heart, but Jaggy is expecting you to lead one of those, so the suit probably holds no terrors for him. I was about to select the safe jack of diamonds when suddenly, Rosenberg came to life with a double of six clubs in the pass-out seat!

Now, we play a convention where the double of a slam asks for an unusual lead — sometimes, the doubler will have a void, but otherwise he is asking you to lead specifically a spade.

If Rosenberg had a void, I would have expected him to do something more violent at his first turn than a simple raise to two hearts. Therefore, I reasoned, he must be asking for a spade lead. So I led one, and this was the deal (see table left). Just look at what Michael had done. If I had led a diamond, Jaggy would not have been able to reach dummy for a club finesse.

So, he would have been forced to lay down the ace of clubs, dropping my king.

Later, a lead towards the king of spades would have enabled him to make the slam with ease. However,

	North	
	♠85	
	♥Q963	
	♦65	
	♣J9872	
West		**East**
♠J72		♠AQ63
♥K10842		♥J75
♦J1097		♦Q8432
♣K		♣6
	South	
	♠K1094	
	♥A	
	♦AK	
	♣AQ10543	

The bidding was as follows:

South	West	North	East
Jaggy	Zia	Ghose	R'berg
1♣	1♥	Pass	2♥
3♣	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♣	Pass	Pass	D'ble
Pass	Pass	Pass	

when I dutifully led a spade, Rosenberg won with the ace and continued the suit.

Jaggy won with the king and — obviously deciding that Michael's double was based on the guarded king of clubs — crossed to dummy by ruffing a spade and took the club finesse! One down.

Rugby Union Premiership One: Saracens 50 Bath 23

Bath sink to a record defeat

Robert Armstrong

BATH plunged to a record league defeat last Sunday as the Premiership leaders Saracens played like champions elect at Vicarage Road. Never in 11 seasons of league competition had Bath conceded a half-century of points or six tries, or lost by such a margin.

Saracens were unstoppable. Under the inspirational prompting of their coach Francois Pienaar they displayed a cavalier fluency, exemplified by the Irish wing Richard Wallace and the South African full-back Gavin Johnson who each scored two tries. Michael Lynagh added to Bath's agony by kicking 20 points.

Andy Robinson, the Bath coach, said his side had been unable to cope with their opponents' pace. "Saracens capitalised on our mistakes with six tries from six opportunities. They dictated the whole pace of the game — they were the side that wanted it more."

Bath's five-week lay-off from competitive rugby did them no favours. They looked ring-rusty as they struggled to withstand an unrelenting tide of black shirts. Their chief problem was in the back row with Eric Peters and Nathan Thomas often losing out in an untidy scrap for possession whenever a pass went astray or the ball was spilled.

In contrast Saracens appeared to have an extra loose forward on hand to support the aggressive driving of Richard Hill, who together with Tony Diprose provided a splendid platform from which the backs were able to prosper. Saracens' athletic locks Paddy Johns and Danny Grewcock also found time to forge links with their shrewd half-backs, Lynagh and Kyran Bracken.

Saracens stunned Bath with a 13th-minute try of classic simplicity. When the wing Brendon Daniel burst through the midfield, Bath's No 10 Richard Butland floored him with a superb tackle in front of the posts. But the ball was swiftly cleared to the right by Bracken for Johnson to stride over.

At 13-9, Saracens seized control with two breathtaking tries by Wallace in a six-minute period. After Jonathan Callard had landed a short penalty goal Saracens forced the Bath No 8 Dan Lyle into an error from the restart. Diprose and Hill recycled the ball, enabling Ryan Constable to put Wallace over on the right. Bath were badly at fault in failing to prevent the Irishman's second try, allowing him to sprint 40 metres untouched to score at the posts. Between times Lynagh kicked three penalty goals and a conversion to make it 28-9 at half-time.

Saracen's onslaught continued after the break and Bath were unable to find an answer.



Heavy-handed approach . . . Saracen's Richard Hill prepares to pounce on Bath's scrum-half Andy Nicol PHOTO TOM JENKINS

Football results

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Arsnal 1, Blackburn Rovers 3; Barnsley 2, Newcastle United 2, Bolton Wanderers 3, Derby County 3; Chelsea 0, Leeds United 0; Coventry City 4, Tottenham Hotspur 0; Crystal Palace 0, Liverpool 3; Everton 0, Wimbledon 0, Manchester United 1, Aston Villa 0; Southampton 2, Leicester City 1; West Ham United 1, Sheffield Wed 0.
Leading positions: 1, Manchester United (played 18-points 40); 2, Blackburn (18-36), 3 Chelsea (18-35).

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE: Division One: Birmnghm 2, Man City 1; Bradford 1, Bury 0, Charlton 1, Port Vale 0; Huddersfld 1 Norwich 3; Ipswich 2, Portsmth 0; Middlesbro 4, Reading 0; Sheffield United 2, Swindon 1; Stockport 3, Tranmere 1; Stoke 0, Crewe 2; Sunderlnd 2, WBA 0; Wolves 2, Nottingham Forest 1
Leading positions: 1, Middlesbrough (22-46); 2, Nottingham Forest (22-42); 3, Sheffield United (22-41)

Division Two: Brentford 3, Blackpool 1; Burnley 0, Wigan 2; Carlisle 2, Fulham 0; Chesterfld 0, Luton 0; Gillingham 1, Southend 2; Plymouth 3, Millwall 0; Preston 1, Northmptn 0; Walsall 2, Bournemth 1, Watford 1, Bristol City 1; Wycombe 2, Oldham 1; York 1, Wrexham 0.
Leading positions: 1, Watford (22-50); 2, Bristol City (22-46); 3, Oldham (22-34).

Division Three: Barnet 3, Macclesfld 1; Cardiff 0, Peterboro 0; Chester 2, Darlington 1; Hull 3, Colchester 1; Lincoln 1, Hartlepool 1; Mansfield 1, Brighton 1; Notts Co 5, Doncaster 2, Rochdale 3, Swansea 0; Rotherham 0, Torquay 1; Sc'thorpe 1, Scarboro 3; Shrewsbry 1, Leyton O 2.
Leading positions: 1, Notts County (22-41); 2, Lincoln City (22-41); Peterborough (22-40).

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE:
Premier Division: Celtic 1, Hearts 0; Dunfrmline 0, Rangers 0; Hibernian 2, Aberdeen 2; Motherwell 1, Dundee U 0; St Johnstn 1, Kilmarnk 1.
Leading positions: 1, Hearts (17-37); 2, Rangers (17-36); 3, Celtic (17-35).

First Division: Ayr 0, St Mirren 2; Dundee 0, Stirling A 0; Morton 0, Falkirk 2; Hamilton P, Airdrie P; Partick 1, Raith 3.
Leading positions: 1, Dundee (17-35); 2, Raith (17-28); Hamilton (16-28).

Second Division: Clydebank 1, Inverness CT 1, East Fife 3, Brechin 1; Forfar 2, Livingston 2; Stenhsmr 3, Stranraer 0.
Leading positions: 1, Livingston (16-30); 2, Clydebank (16-29); 3, Stranraer (16-22).

Third Division: Arbroath 3, Cowdnbth 2; Berwick 1, Montrose 2; East Stirling 1, Albion 0, Queens Pk 3, Alloa 0; Ross County 2, Dumbarton 3.
Leading positions: 1, Arbroath (17-35); 2, Ross County (17-31); 3, East Stirling (17-31).

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Juventus leave it late to make the last eight

MANCHESTER UNITED, who were already through to the quarter-finals of the European Champions Cup and therefore playing under no real pressure, were beaten for the first time in this season's competition, going down 1-0 to Juventus in Turin.

A header from Filippo Inzaghi seven minutes from the final whistle ensured the Italian champions' place in the knockout stages along with Bayer Leverkusen as the two best runners-up.

Peter Schmeichel pulled off a series of superb saves from Inzaghi and Zinedine Zidane. United also had their moments, and Andy Cole, who came on for the last 17 minutes, missed a late chance to equalise.

The five other teams making the quarter-finals line-up are Bayern Munich, Borussia Dortmund, Monaco, Real Madrid and Dynamo Kiev.

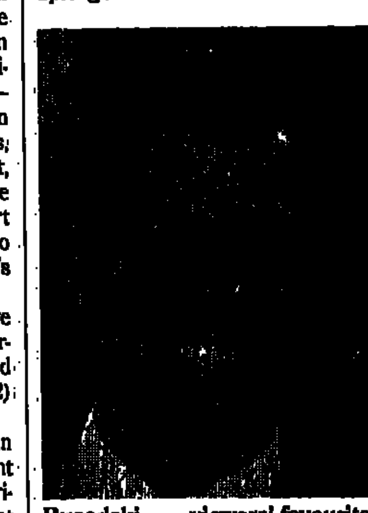
Kiev, also previously unbeaten and impressive group winners, were another club who found themselves on the losing side. They went down 2-0 at St James' Park to Newcastle United, whose debut appearance in the European Champions competition ended the way it had begun — with a victory. But sadly, in between the opening and closing chapters, the Tyneside club lost the plot, beaten three times with one game drawn. John Barnes and Stuart Pearce were the players who brought a flourish to Newcastle's exit.

Meanwhile Aston Villa are through to their first European quarter-final in 15 years. They defeated Steaua Bucharest 2-0 (aggregate 3-2) at Villa Park in the Uefa Cup.

Savo Milosevic, Villa's Serbian striker who seems to have spent most of this season linked with various moves to European clubs, got the all-important goal 19 minutes from time, and Ian Taylor sewed things up towards the end against a Romanian side who struggled to make any impact.

THE former Premiership goalkeepers Bruce Grobbelaar and Hans Segers, cleared earlier this year by a court of match-fixing charges, walked away from a Football Association disciplinary hearing with no more than a slap on the wrist after admitting breaking rules on betting. The two were each given a six-month ban and $16,800 fine, but the punishments were suspended for two years.

GREG RUSEDSKI, was named BBC Sports Personality of Year, ahead of his great rival Tim Henman and oarsman Steve Redgrave. The triumphant British Lions rugby team, who defeated the Springboks in the recent Test series in South Africa, picked up the team award in the vote by TV viewers.



Rusedski . . . viewers' favourite

RYAN RHODES failed to win the vacant World Boxing Organisation middleweight title in his home town of Sheffield when he was beaten on points by Canada's Otis Grant in a gruelling 12-round bout. Rhodes outshone his opponent in the opening round but then Grant took control. "I will be back, I'm still learning," said the 21-year-old after his defeat.

CAMBRIDGE University rugby players marched to their fourth successive Bowring Bowl by beating Oxford 29-17. Oxford's much-vaunted pack had been optimistic that they would end Cambridge's domination, but found themselves 14-3 down at half time and were denied a late revival.

WEST INDIES dropped to third place in Wisden's world cricket championship table after their 3-0 Test whitewash by Pakistan. Australia remain top, with South Africa second.

SOUTH AFRICA and China have been nominated as reserves for the 1998 World Motor Racing Championship, a warning signal from the FIA, the sport's governing body, that it is prepared to take Formula One out of Europe if a tobacco sponsorship ban is implemented by the European Union. The two countries may replace Belgium, Portugal or France, all of whose grand prix are facing an uncertain future due to the tobacco legislation.

Cricket

England shine under the Arabian lights

Mike Selvey in Sharjah

ADAM HOLLIOAKE'S vibrant England squad qualified for Friday's final of the Champions Cup with an eight-run victory over Pakistan in a pulsating match under lights on Monday.

England came here for experience first and foremost but have won all three qualifying matches and exceeded expectations. Fielding the same XI for the third match running, England were forced to dig deeper for victory than at any time in the previous two games.

Alec Stewart (48) and Alistair Brown (41) had given them a fine start with an opening stand of 71 in 13 overs. But the innings was then stifled by the spin of Saqlain Mushtaq (four for 26), Manzoor Akhtar (four for 50) and Mushtaq Ahmed despite Graeme Hick's 40.

Even on a wearing pitch, a total of 215 for nine ought not to have provided too stiff a target for so dynamic a batting side as Pakistan, even without the injured Inzamam.

England in turn experienced the ecstasy of seeing Dougie Brown knock back Shahid Afridi's off stump with his second ball and Dean Headley do the same to Aamir Sohail with his first, and then the agony of a scintillating third-wicket partnership of 94 in 20 overs between Saeed Anwar and Ijaz Ahmed.

Once again the bowlers, led by Mark Ealham and supported by quality fielding, fought back. Ealham survived a murderous assault from Anwar, which saw 16 come from his second over, to bowl his last eight overs for only 19 runs. He also took the vital wicket of Ijaz for 41, the ball after Robert Croft had bowled Anwar for 54.

By now Pakistan had decided to forget the mathematics and just ensure they won the match. But when Croft bowled Akhtar Sarfraz, and Matthew Fleming dismissed the dangerous Moin Khan in his first over, even that began to look beyond them.

They were 40 runs short at the 44-over cut-off point, but then lost Wasim Akram to a brilliant boundary catch by Dougie Brown, followed by their last recognised batsman Manzoor, the Man of the Match, who was run out by Nick Knight for 44.

With two overs left Pakistan required 18 with two wickets in hand. Eight came from Hollioake's first four deliveries but on the fifth Azhar Mahmood skied the ball into the lights; Stewart made the catch and went on a jig of joy. Then he pounced again, throwing down the stumps when Saqlain moved out of the crease after Hollioake's final ball had hit him on the pad.

In their other two matches England overhauled West Indies' total of 197 in 45.5 overs with the loss of six wickets thanks to a brisk 57 from Graham Thorpe. Against India, Stewart blazed 116 runs in England's total of 250. In reply, India were all out for 243.